

ay, June 16, 1996
Queen Elizabeth
to pass duties
Charles

Pro-Israeli militiaman killed

BEIRUT (AFP) — Hizbollah guerrillas on Sunday killed a pro-Israeli militiaman in a roadside bomb attack in Israel's "security zone" in southern Lebanon, the South Lebanon Army (SLA) radio reported. It said the bomb went off on a road leading to the town of Jezzin held by the militia in the north of the occupied border zone. The Iranian-backed guerrillas said in a statement from Beirut that one of its commando units had set off the bomb as a SLA troop transport travelled along the road to Sfarai, close to Jezzin. It said it had "killed or wounded the passengers." Hizbollah had "exploded a second bomb when (SLA) reinforcements arrived at the site which increased the number of victims."

ON DON (R) — Queen Elizabeth II, 82, is the most of her reign as she prepares to pass duties to her son, Prince Charles, as she prepares to abdicate, as the queen's health gets older and she involves more and more responsibility to the "Wales." The queen's official birthday is Sunday. She has been in the spotlight since she married Prince Charles in 1981. She is currently in divorce proceedings with her husband, Prince Charles. She has three children: Prince William, Prince Harry, and Prince Louis. She has also been involved in various royal duties and has been a member of the Order of the Garter since 1987.

Minister intervenes; name row
OPENING: The PIA Agency...
Canada to be surrogate motherhood

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's parliament on Sunday adopted a bill cancelling a law on libel which journalists fought against for over a year, saying it suppressed the freedom of the press, the state news agency MENA said. The law returns punishments for libel and other "press crimes" to "what they were before the 1995 law," the agency said. The 1995 law imposed harsh prison sentences up to 15 years for libel, compared with a maximum of two years before, and introduced heavy fines of up to \$4,000 (see page 2). The prison sentences will be reduced, but the fines will remain at the same levels, according to the daily Al Ahram.

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Regent visits ministry, army unit

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the Regent, Sunday visited the Ministry of Interior and was briefed by Interior Minister Awad Khleifat on the ministry's plans concerning traffic, public safety measures, passports and other public affairs. The Regent inspected the ministry's new organisational plan for the work of the various offices of governors in various parts of the country and the decentralisation process being adopted there. The Regent also visited the Hamzeh Ben Abdul Muteleh Brigade and met its commanders and senior officers who briefed him on their duties and training programmes. He was presented with a token gift from the brigade's commander.

80 dead, dozens missing in Yemen

SANAA (AFP) — At least 80 people were killed and dozens more are missing after violent storms and rain thrashed the central part of Yemen, an official said Sunday. Heavy rains have hit the area of Shabwa, 300 kilometres east of Sanaa, since Thursday, sweeping away more than 100 houses in the main city of Ataq, Mohse Omar Ali, an official in the region, told AFP by telephone. Authorities have launched a large search and rescue operation, but have been hampered by the continuing rain, with many towns being completely cut off, he added.

Egypt abolishes press law

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Libya: Row with Kuwait defused

KUWAIT (R) — A diplomatic row between Kuwait and Libya over remarks by Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has been defused, Libya's envoy in Kuwait said on Sunday. "Kuwaiti officials received with understanding Libya's explanation," Kuwait's official news agency KUNA quoted Libya's charge d'affaires in Kuwait, Idris Abudib, as saying, Colonel Qadhafi said in Cairo in May that Kuwait "should never have been independent if it could not defend itself," a reference to Kuwait's liberation by a U.S.-led coalition that ended Iraq's occupation in 1991. Kuwait summoned its envoy in Tripoli for consultation over Col. Qadhafi's remarks, which it said were an "infringement of its independence and sovereignty." Libya's explanation helped the two states "overcome that period and contained the problem and removed flaws over the speech of the brother leader Qadhafi," Mr. Abudib said.



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي

Turkey confirms Syrian army buildup on border

ANKARA (AFP) — Syria has massed armoured units in areas near its border with Turkey, the semi-official Anatolia news agency said Sunday, but a Syrian official with the Arab League ruled out armed conflict. Anatolia quoted Syrian and Turkish traders who said they had seen Syrian armoured vehicles advancing towards the Turkish border as well as armoured units posted in several Syrian border areas. It did not identify the provinces where the armoured units were but its report was dated from Nusaybin, close to Mardin near the border.

A spokesman for the Turkish army chief of staff in Ankara on Sunday refused to comment on the reports and said the army headquarters was "very calm."

According to the London-based Saudi daily Al

Hayat on Saturday, Syria "moved around 40,000 soldiers to border areas with Turkey" after reports that Ankara was behind four bomb blasts in the country. Travellers arriving in Damascus from the Turkish border spoke of tension there as well as gunfire from the Turkish side which "seems to be on a permanent state of alert," Al Hayat said. The travellers also reported Syrian troop reinforcements "for the first time" in areas near the border, it added.

Arab League Deputy Secretary General Muaffak Al Allaf, and Syria's former deputy foreign minister, said the league was watching developments "with concern."

He also spoke of reports of Turkish troop movements, but he "ruled out the eruption of an armed conflict as all these (troop) movements were aimed at

putting pressure on Syria for Israel's gain." Anatolia, still quoting traders, said the bomb attacks in Syria were carried out by the Muslim Brotherhood. The agency added there had been many explosions in the past week in the Syrian provinces along the 800-kilometre Turkish-Syrian border, but gave no details of casualties caused by the blasts which eyewitnesses said usually happened in the evenings.

The Syrian authorities have carried out a wave of arrests within the Turkish community — Syrians of Turkish origin — who are suspected of carrying out the attacks, Anatolia said.

It added that since May Damascus had exerted tight controls on Turkish traders doing business along the border with Syria.

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Saudi, Syrian and Egyptian ministers meet on summit

RIYADH (Agencies) — The foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria will meet in Damascus on Tuesday to discuss plans for an Arab summit on the Middle East peace process, an Arab diplomat said here Sunday.

The June 21-23 summit will focus on restoring Arab unity as well as the future of the peace process following the election of right-wing Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu as Israeli prime minister.

Arab foreign ministers will meet first in Cairo on Friday to prepare for the summit opening the next day. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat arrived in Cairo en route to China on Sunday evening and took the opportunity of a meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa to prepare for the summit.

Mr. Musa told reporters at Cairo airport they would discuss the summit agenda and latest developments to the Palestinian territories and to Israel.

Asked about Israeli redeployment in the West Bank town of Hebron, he said: "This is Netanyahu's real test and we are waiting to see what he will do in this matter."

Mr. Arafat was to leave for Beijing in the early hours of Monday, returning to Cairo in time for the opening of the summit on Saturday morning. Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir said that Sudan would attend the summit.

"Sudan will attend and we are already preparing a position to present to the conference," Lieutenant-General Bashir told a news conference.

"The summit is a positive step especially in the current conditions in the Arab World... we hope it will bring about a spirit of unity and lead to a just peace covering all Arab sides especially the rights of the Palestinian people to set up a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem," he added.

Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak, who accused Sudan of trying to kill him in Addis Ababa last June, last week invited all Arab republics and the picture was

(Continued on page 7)

Israeli policeman killed in West Bank attack

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A Palestinian shot and killed an Israeli policeman and wounded his wife Sunday in an attack on the West Bank, Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal said.

The policeman's wife was hit twice in the chest in the attack in the northern village of Biddya, but their 18-month-old son escaped unhurt, police said.

The policeman, who was stationed on the West Bank, had been dressed in civilian clothes when he and his family entered a toy shop in the village. "A young Palestinian entered into the shop and opened fire before fleeing," General Gaby Ophir, head of the Israeli forces on the West Bank, told the radio. The attacker was armed with a home-made pistol, suggesting he was working alone, although earlier police reports said several Palestinians in a car stopped in front of the premises and opened fire before fleeing.

The woman ran from the shop clutching her son and an Israeli car stopped and took her to the nearby settlement of Ariel to raise the

alarm. Several Israeli guards from the settlement went to the shop where they found the policeman in a critical condition, Israel Radio said. He died shortly afterwards from his injuries.

The Israeli army clamped a curfew on the village, which is in an area under Palestinian administration but Israeli military control. Israeli soldiers arrested several Palestinians for interrogation about the attack including the owner of the toy store. They also forced all the shops in the village to shut.

The attack was the second on Israelis in eight days. Last Sunday a Jewish couple from the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba was shot and killed inside Israel as they returned home from a wedding.

Palestinian sources said the Israeli army had prevented a team of Palestinian police from examining the scene of Sunday's attack as part of their own inquiries. Colonel Aouni Samara, head of the Palestinian police in the area, said a Palestinian police force tried to reach the area to investigate but was blocked by Israeli troops.

Ahmad Qouriea, speaker of the Palestinian legislative council, condemned Sunday's attack and said his government was making every effort to stop militant attacks against Israelis.

Mr. Shahal called for increased vigilance in the interim period before Benjamin Netanyahu's new government takes over. He said militants intended to increase violence "in order to increase confusion and bring about unrest."

Two weeks ago two workers with the Israeli telephone company Bezek were wounded by a bombing in the same area as Biddya, in an attack blamed by Israel on the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas).

Mr. Netanyahu swept to power over peace architect and incumbent Prime Minister Shimon Peres on a headline platform pledging to put the security of Israelis at the top of his political agenda.

He clawed back a huge deficit in the polls amid widespread fear among Israeli voters caused by a wave of militant suicide bombings in the Jewish state in late February and early March.

Jordan, U.S. firm sign deal for \$2.5-billion refinery at Aqaba

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian government and the U.S. Corporate Holdings of America (CHA) on Sunday signed a preliminary agreement under which a consortium led by CHA will build, operate and transfer a \$2.5 billion oil refinery at Aqaba.

The agreement, which represents the largest single American investment in Jordan, was signed by Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Hashem Dahbas and CHA President Francis J. Coseno.

Under the deal, CHA, with equity participation by other American firms and local investors, will build a refinery with an installed capacity to process 250,000 barrels per day of crude mainly for export purposes. It will operate the facility for 20 years before handing it over to the Jordanian government.

It is the first major build, operate and transfer agreement signed by the Jordanian government, which started inviting foreign investments to such ventures at the Middle East and North Africa economic summit held here in October last year.

The accord also includes a 165-megawatt power plant and a 15,000-30,000 cubic metre per day desalination plant. Both facilities will supply the Jordanian market.

Officials here expected the Kingdom to get about \$200 million per year in royalty during the 20-year period at a rate of 30 cents per barrel of oil exported. The Kingdom will also get oil products at discounted prices from the facility.

The accord signed on Sunday is preliminary since it requires the approval of the Council of Ministers. As such, the document calls for a final accord to be signed in 180 days.

(Continued on page 7)

Yeltsin takes early lead in elections

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin was slightly ahead of communist challenger Gennady Zyuganov in Sunday's first round of the Russian presidential elections, early official results and an exit poll showed.

A count of seven per cent of voting returns in 22 regions of Russia's Far East showed Mr. Yeltsin scored 32.3 per cent, Mr. Zyuganov 29.1 per cent, nationalist candidate Alexander Lebed 15.8 per cent and ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy 9.5 per cent.

Russia has 89 regions and republics and the picture was likely to change as more results came in during the night. An exit poll released by CNN television showed Mr. Yeltsin with 35 per cent of the vote and Mr. Zyuganov with 29 per cent.

If no candidate wins 50 per cent of the votes, the top two will meet in a run-off round in July. The exit poll, which questioned 10,000 people, showed Mr. Lebed in third place with 15 per cent.

Liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky had nine per cent and Mr. Zhirinovskiy scored seven per cent, the poll found.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin walks past a fence to a polling booth in Moscow early Sunday (Reuters photo)

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Russian President Boris Yeltsin walks past a fence to a polling booth in Moscow early Sunday (Reuters photo)

(Continued on page 7)

U.N. inspectors say Iraqis determined to deny access to suspected arms sites

MANAMA (AFP) — U.N. inspectors had a "very bad experience" in one of their toughest missions yet in Iraq when authorities for the first time flatly refused access to suspected weapons sites, team leader Nikita Smidovich said here Sunday.

In previous standoffs the "Iraqis had always said 'let us work out arrangements' and later permitted us to visit the site, although after 'some delay,'" Mr. Smidovich told AFP after arriving in Bahrain.

"But this time it was a flat, and categorical denial. They said: 'No, you will not inspect. This is a security sensitive site,'" said Mr. Smidovich, a Russian ballistic weapons expert and veteran of inspection missions to Baghdad.

"It was a very bad experience this time," he said. The 54 inspectors from the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) on dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction arrived here after their New York headquarters ordered them to lift their vigil outside three sites.

The Iraqis, citing national security, had barred them from entering the Republican Guard sites during a five-day standoff. In Baghdad, Babel newspaper, which is run by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday, accused the United States of seeking an excuse to launch a military strike against Baghdad.

Mr. Smidovich told

reporters in Baghdad earlier that the team was withdrawn "on the instruction of the executive chairman of the special commission," Rolf Ekeus, who was due to leave New York for Baghdad on Monday.

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Madeleine Albright said Mr. Ekeus would be armed with a "strong message" aimed at obtaining access to the sites.

Mr. Smidovich was asked if he would report to Ekeus when he arrives in Bahrain on his way to Baghdad. "You can draw your own conclusions," he said.

It was not clear if the UNSCOM team, which is booked in the Holiday Inn hotel here until Tuesday, would travel back to Baghdad with Mr. Ekeus.

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Netanyahu races to form coalition cabinet

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Last-minute bargaining Sunday threatened to delay Benjamin Netanyahu's plans to unveil Israel's new coalition government as religious and centre-right parties battled to wrest final concessions from the new Israeli leader.

The right-wing prime minister-elect had until 4:00 p.m. (1300GMT) Sunday to deliver a signed copy of his proposed line-up to parliament's secretariat if it was to be included on the agenda for Monday's opening session of the Knesset.

His top aide Avigdor Lieberman told Israel Radio that the new government would be presented to parliament on Monday.

But Mr. Netanyahu was Sunday still locked in negotiations trying to ally the demands of his own Likud Party and the six religious and centrist parties whose backing is vital to form a

coalition. Mr. Netanyahu beat incumbent Prime Minister Shimon Peres by barely one per cent in the May 29 race for the premiership, but in the legislative polls his party garnered 32 seats in the 120-seat Knesset compared with Peres' Labour Party which got 34.

Throughout Saturday night Mr. Netanyahu negotiated in vain with Nathan Sharansky, leader of the Israel B'aliya party of Russian-speaking immigrants. The new party swept onto Israel's political scene winning seven seats in parliament, and giving it a strong hand in the balance of power.

Mr. Sharansky has refused to drop demands to be housing minister — a portfolio which has a \$3 billion annual budget — in return for his party's support.

But the ultra-orthodox United Torah Judaism, which won four deputies, as well as some Likud leaders also cover the post. Mr. Netanyahu tried to offer Israel B'aliya the trade and industry portfolios as well as the integration ministry in compensation, but Mr. Sharansky refused.

Further difficulties have been introduced by the religious parties, the United Torah Judaism together with has (10 deputies) and the National Religious Party (nine), which have demanded that a party whip be introduced for all coalition parties during any debate on bills aimed at boosting religious influence on daily life.

"It is an imperative condition for our participation," warned Avraham Ravitz from the United Torah Judaism.

The secular centre-right Third Way (four deputies) as well as Israel B'aliya have rejected the idea, saying they should have a free hand to vote on legislation con-

cerning relations between the state and religion. Mr. Netanyahu is also performing a tough balancing act trying to marry the various demands of his own Likud leaders, with many facing the likelihood of being left out of the government because there are simply not enough portfolios to go round. Under the law the cabinet is limited to 17 ministers. So far seven posts have been proposed to Likud's potential allies leaving the party with only 10 for itself. On Sunday Mr. Netanyahu met with several of the Likud "barons" and potential ministers, including hardliner and former Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, Benny Begin who is opposed to the autonomy accords struck with the Palestinians and Dan Meridor, the leader of the moderate wing.

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Development of women needs effort from within, U.S. expert tells workshop

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Improvement of the status of women should start from within in order to develop successful women's organisation centres in Jordan, according to U.S. expert Samira Harfoush-Hradsky.

Dr. Harfoush-Hradsky, director of the Middle East and North Africa Program at the Education Development Centre in Washington, said Sunday during a two-day workshop on women's resource centres, women's empowerment to society means empowerment for all.

"Everything starts from within," Dr. Harfoush-Hradsky said, adding "we empower ourselves then we empower others."

Dr. Harfoush-Hradsky, who was addressing more than 30 women representing various institutes, said that organisation, learning, determination, and collaboration were key elements for success.

"In order to start or develop an existing centre you have to have a systematic and logical common sense. You need to collaborate, grab the opportunities and have the courage to start a business," she asserted.

According to Dr. Harfoush-Hradsky, the Amman workshop is part of an exchange programme on women's resource centres

that was initiated last year when four Jordanian women travelled to the United States on a three-week programme to learn ways on how to provide services to improve Jordanian women's political, social and financial status.

"This is phase two of the project, and we are going to discuss and look into how these women became effective, what obstacles they have faced and what could be done to improve their status," she said.

Dr. Harfoush-Hradsky said issues to be discussed with the participants include, the logical steps needed to start a centre, and how to do networking. Then participants will be exposed to a women's centre's successful experiment as a model.

Farah Daghestani, director general of the Princess Basma Women's Resource Centre, said efforts needed to be exerted to create an organised mechanism for furthering the cause of women in Jordan, "an issue that was stressed during the women's conference in Beijing."

"Here in Jordan, we are fortunate in the wealth of the knowledge and experience that each of the women's group encompasses," said Ms. Daghestani, who opened the workshop. Ms. Daghestani stressed the importance of increasing knowledge through

exchanges.

"We in Jordan have the opportunity to develop and expand a national mechanism for comprehensive development strategies," she told the workshop's participants.

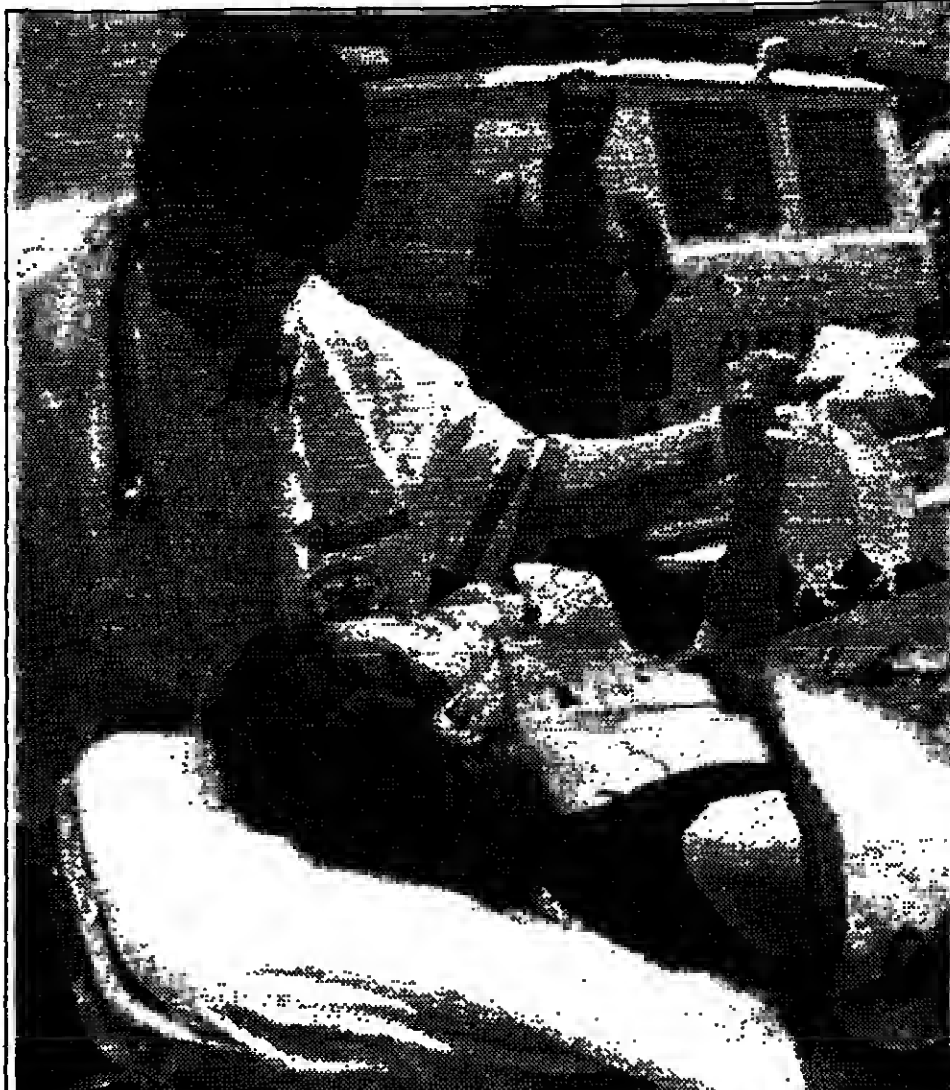
Ms. Daghestani referred to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, stating that the conference stressed the need to place women at the heart of any development agenda.

"Women's empowerment and the ultimate inclusion in society, depends on a multi-faceted and comprehensive approach which considers a broad spectrum of needs," she said.

The workshop aims at strengthening and improving women's centres in Jordan. Sunday's lectures focused on development for small enterprises, using women's centres as a case study.

Other lecturers in the workshop include, Judy Mueller, executive director of the Women's Centre, Vienna, Virginia, and Judge Rosemarie Annunziata, Virginia Court of Appeals.

The event, which is being held at the Queen Zein Al Sharaf Complex for Social Development, is organised by the American Centre. It will conclude its working papers by addressing topics involved with the management and sustainability of non-governmental organisations (NGOs).



ATTACK VICTIM: Emergency crews rush an Israeli woman wounded in an attack in the occupied West Bank on Sunday into Beilinson Hospital near Tel Aviv. The woman's husband, a policeman, was killed when a Palestinian youth shot him while they were shopping in a Palestinian village (see page one (Reuters photo))

Publisher to face 3 charges in connection with forged dollars

AMMAN (J.T.) — Formal charges are expected to be pressed soon against the publisher of a local tabloid who is under detention after being arrested while in possession of \$100,000 in forged American bank notes, a judicial source said Sunday.

"Prosecutors have completed the questioning of Nayef Tawara," publisher of the Al Bilad weekly tabloid, and "are now preparing the formal charge sheet," said the source.

"The case has two aspects, one to be tried at the State Security Court and the other at the regular court," added the source, who declined to be identified.

The source said the charge sheet to be drawn up by the prosecutor of the State Security Court will include two counts: "possession and import of forged currency." A third count — "receiving money through clandestine means from an external source" — will be filed at the civil court.

According to the source, Mr. Tawara, who was arrested on May 25 after police discovered \$100,000 in forged American banknotes, told investigators that the money had come from Qusai Hussein, a son of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Police were acting upon a "tip-off" when they arrested Mr. Tawara after keeping him under surveillance for three days, the source said.

Police intercepted his car and a search of the vehicle, registered to his name, unveiled the forged currency in an envelope

loose concealed under the seat, according to the source. Mr. Tawara was immediately arrested.

"Upon interrogation, Tawara told investigators that the money was handed over to him by an Iraqi named Jassem and that it came from Qusai Hussein," said the source. "He said he did not know why the money was sent to him."

"We are not hating that theory," according to the source, who declined to elaborate. The source also declined to say whether police knew in advance that the money was counterfeit or Mr. Tawara was also aware that he was receiving forged banknotes.

The source said forensic experts had established that "almost the entire amount" of bank notes seized from Mr. Tawara were forgeries.

Qusai Hussein, 29, heads Iraqi military intelligence and a security unit directly in charge of protecting senior Iraqi figures, including President Saddam himself.

Mr. Tawara's Al Bilad is known for running sensational political stories such as Iraq agreeing to take hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees as part of a compromise settlement between the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Israel and that Baghdad had set tough conditions for giving priority to Jordan in trade following its oil-for-food agreement with the U.N. Most of its stories were denied by Jordanian and Iraqi officials.

Masaari calls for 'annihilation of Jews'

LONDON (AFP) — Exiled Saudi dissident Mohamed Al Masaari has called for the annihilation of the Jews, laying himself open to prosecution under British law, the Sunday Times reported. Mr. Masaari, 49, head of the London-based Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights, which is banned in Saudi Arabia, recently successfully fought off a British

government attempt to deport him. The Sunday Times said that in a weekly newsletter in Arabic destined for his supporters in the Middle East Mr. Masaari had referred to the "cowardly Zionist enemy" whose "annihilation is not difficult for Muslims." "The battle against the Jews is a specific obligation on all Muslim until they annihilate them and drive them

out of Palestine," he said. In the latest edition of his newsletter, Mr. Masaari reportedly wrote that the establishment of Israel was a violation of Islamic law, adding, "they must be fought until they are exterminated." The Sunday Times said that Scotland Yard was considering whether the dissident could be prosecuted for incitement to racial hatred.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ashrawi appointed higher education minister

NABLUS (AFP) — Hanan Ashrawi, representative for Jerusalem on the Palestinian legislative council, was made higher education minister. Palestinian sources said. Appointed by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Dr. Ashrawi was sworn in at a meeting of the legislative council in Nablus chaired by Ahmed Qorie, the source added. Mr. Arafat split the education portfolio, held by Yasser Amr, into two parts to accommodate Dr. Ashrawi's new post.

Libyan committees to fight corruption

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has formed 200 new committees made up of junior officers to step up the fight against corruption in Libya, the official news agency IANA said Sunday. The new committees, together with 81 military units set up at the end of May, are tasked with implementing a "purification law" to clamp down on corruption, said the agency. One thousand "revolutionary committees" have been called on to take part in the "collection of information and inquiries" as part of the application of the law, said IANA. The revolutionary committees, made up of civilians, first appeared shortly after Colonel Qadhafi came to power in 1969. At the beginning of June the Libyan leader said the committees would use all means possible to restore order and to fight against corruption — including the execution without trial of all smugglers. In April local assemblies looked at new laws to crack down on the smuggling of contraband, drugs and foreign currency and to tightly control any kind of financial brokering operations. Col. Qadhafi warned at the beginning of March that anybody dealing illegally in foreign currency, especially US dollars, could face the amputation of an arm or a leg, or even the death penalty.

Veteran Egyptian militant arrested

CAIRO (AFP) — Police have arrested a veteran militant on the run for seven years for killing a former member of his Jihad organisation, the government daily Al-Ahram said on Sunday. Ashraf Zaki Mohammad, 30, was arrested in the north Cairo neighbourhood of Ain Shams on Saturday after police in the southern province of Beni Sweif alerted Cairo authorities to his hiding place, the paper said. Mohammad had been on the run from police since 1989 when he killed Hussam Al-Batukhi, who split from his Jihad organisation, in Beni Sweif, 125 kilometres south of Cairo. He had also killed a policeman the same year and hummed down a number of pharmacies, the paper said. Meanwhile, a police officer in the southern province of Minya, a botched militant activity, was killed when he accidentally shot himself early Sunday, police said. Lieutenant Akram Mohammad Salem, 27, was playing with his machine gun in his residence in Manshiyat Al-Mughalqa town, 300 kilometres south of Cairo, when it went off and shot him in the chest, police said.

Sudan protests Ethiopian dam projects

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Khartoum on Sunday protested plans by Ethiopia to build two dams on tributaries of the Nile River, saying they would have a serious impact on Sudan and Egypt downstream. "Ethiopia should have notified and gained the consent of Sudan and Egypt before deciding to build any dam on the river," Irrigation Minister Yagub Abu Sbara said, quoted by the independent daily Al-Ahram. "The project will have a grave impact on the countries through which the river flows," he said, adding that the world bank, which intends to finance the dams, "should first consider the effects on other parties." Ethiopia's parliament last week approved dam projects on the blue Nile and the Upper Atbara River, which flows into the Nile, to be financed by the World Bank, the paper said. The deputy speaker of Sudan's parliament Abdul Aziz Siddiqi cautioned that the Ethiopian parliament decision "does not necessarily mean execution of the project has become a reality." "Ethiopia is bound by Nile water agreements stipulating that any water project gain approval by Nile basin states," said Mr. Siddiqi.

Papandreou to attend party congress

ATHENS (AFP) — Former Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, recovering from serious illness, plans to attend his Pasok Party's special congress at the end of the month, the parliament speaker said Saturday. The 77-year-old socialist was forced to resign as the country's leader in January after coming close to death, but remains president of Pasok, the ruling socialist party. Mr. Papandreou, whose return to the political scene has created political problems for his successor, Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis, is "very worried about the only" of his party, Speaker Apostolos Karamanlis said. Mr. Simidis is bidding for the party presidency along with Interior Minister Kostas Tsakalopoulos, who left hospital in March, is due to meet the two men before the four-day party congress opens on June 27, with Mr. Papandreou's successor top of the agenda.

Egyptian journalists score unprecedented victory

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian journalists were Sunday celebrating an unprecedented victory after a year-long struggle forced the government to back off from a libel law which they said sought to put an end to their profession.

A full parliamentary session was due to debate new legislation on Sunday after a committee approved a bill Saturday eliminating harsh prison sentences of up to 15 years for libel imposed in May 1995 by what journalists dubbed the "press assassination law."

"We have remained solid for over a year in the greatest friction ever between journalists and the government," Yahya Qallash, a member of the journalists union's executive council, told AFP.

"We had no choice, because if we had not the 1995 law would have put an end to journalism," he said, adding, "what is important is that we have won a reversal of a law that was put on the books."

Although journalists admitted it does not fulfill all their demands, the new bill

largely marks the end of the year-long crisis sparked when parliament passed the 1995 law in a bid to muzzle press criticism of government corruption.

The breakthrough came in a last minute move by President Hosni Mubarak who on Thursday submitted the new legislation after the union asked him to intervene.

The People's Assembly had just begun considering a draft compromise bill to replace the 1995 legislation which also came under fire from journalists who said it ignored their demands and also suppressed press freedom.

The 13-member union council condemned the draft, threatening a mass resignation for the first time in the union's history and planning a sit-in at parliament on Saturday.

"Up until the last minute, the People's Assembly did not intend to respond to a single letter of the journalists' demands," Mr. Qallash said.

The council was to meet with Prime Minister Kamal

Al Jazouli on Sunday and make a last effort to have fines for libel reduced, he added.

The new bill still includes harsh fines for "press crimes" imposed by the 1995 law, including a penalty up to \$5,800 for libel, compared to a maximum \$300 fine before 1995.

Mr. Mubarak won praise for the turnaround from both government and opposition papers. In a meeting with the union council on Saturday he underlined that "freedom of the press is basic and no official can afford it."

But he cautioned journalists that they must "respect society's values" and "not attack the private lives of individuals or the prestige of state institutions."

On the same day, police detained for several hours the only journalist to have received a final sentence under the 1995 law, Magdi Hussein, editor in chief of the Muslim fundamentalist bi-weekly Al-Shaah.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME 1WU

15:00 Bankers (cartoon)
15:30 Richie Rich
16:00 Animals of the Mediterranean
17:00 News flash
17:02 Ordy
17:15 L'Esprit Des Fairs
18:00 Magazine — Thalassa
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine — Cinq Sur Cinq
19:35 The Nanny
20:30 Rock Around the World
22:00 News on English
22:25 The Bird and the Beautiful
[These programmes might change due to live transmission of European championship]

PRAYER TIMES

03:50 Fajr
06:25 Sunrise
12:36 Noon
16:17 Asr
19:47 Maghreb
20:23 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swefeth, Tel. 517741
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Latin Catholics Church Tel. 612101

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637441

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 653026

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 625236

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 645457

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675601

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Moderate weather conditions will prevail with temperatures around average and winds north-westerly moderate to active. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate to active and sea calm.

Min./Max. Temp.

Amman 17/24
Aqaba 23/37
Djersa 17/33
Jordan Valley 22/36

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 32, Aqaba 38, Humidity readings: Amman 37 per cent, Aqaba 29 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 885446
Dr. Jamal Jharab 747351
Dr. Arif Al-Ashhab 602507
Dr. Mohamed Al-Izzah 750791

Ferdous pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 639183
Nairook pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shattari pharmacy 679441
Nairook pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847652

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ammeh 250801
Aljoud pharmacy 1-1

ZARQA:

Dr. Issa Al Omari 901366
Khalil pharmacy 905417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 871111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Intendant 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 759121
Highway Police 643412
Traffic Police 896391
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605881
Price Complaints 661170
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Complaints Information (directly assisted) 121
Overseas Calls 0102201
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 721111
Radio Jordan 741111
Water Authority 680111
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power 815615

Cumpry 636361
RJ Flight Information 08-53203
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53201

HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalil Maternity, J. Amn 642813/6

AKALAH Maternity, J. Amn. 642411/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Maternity, J. Amman 636341
Palestine, Shmiciant 607071
Shmiciant Hospital 609131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 867271
The Home, Abjahi 661273/7
Al-Ahli, Abdull 661654
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafiah 775111/2
Army, Marba 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 880111
Amal Hospital 607165
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Civil Hospital 09-983323
Zarqa National Hospital 09-983151

IRBID:

Prince Basma Hospital 02-275555
Greek Catholic Hospital 02-272272
De Al Nafes Hospital 02-27101

MSB:

Princess Haya Hospital 03-514111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 08-532013 and Marka Airport Tel. 8753013 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 081 52701

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:15 Samua (RJ)
06:30 Damascus (RJ)
06:30 Jeddah (RJ)
06:10 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
06:30 Beirut (RJ)
06:30 New Delhi (RJ)
07:20 Cairo (RJ)
07:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
08:50 Bangkok, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:10 Casablanca (RJ)
04:10 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights

11:45 Khartoum (SD)
13:40 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:30 Kac (AU)
15:00 Vienna (OS)
20:30 Cairo (MS)
20:55 Paris, Damascus (AF)

01:20 Amsterdam (KL)

05:40 London (BA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:50 Aqaba (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:35 Beirut (RJ)
11:00 Casablanca (RJ)
11:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
13:15 Cairo (RJ)
13:25 London (RJ)
13:25 Frankfurt (RJ)
21:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:45 Damascus (RJ)
22:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
23:45 Al Ain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
23:45 Samua (RJ)

Other Flights

06:00 Istanbul (TK)
07:45 Beirut, London (BA)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
13:00 Khartoum (SD)
14:30 Bahrain (GF)
15:30 Kiev (AU)
16:00 Vienna (OS)
21:25 Doha (O7)
23:55 Damascus, Paris (AF)
02:30 Amsterdam (KL)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

20:30 Aqaba (RW)

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday

Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in lbs per kg.

Apples 800 / 500

Apples 700 / 500

Banana 600/600

Banana (Mukammur) 520/520

Banana (imported) 760/500

Cabbage 70 / 50

Cucurbit 180/150

Cauliflower 230/150

Cucumber (large) 150 / 100

Cucumber (small) 150 / 100

Eggplant 210 / 140

Garlic 650/400

Lemon 800/500

Marrow (large) 160 / 100

Marrow (small) 240 / 160

Mulukhiyah 160 / 110

Onion (dry) 120 / 80

Okra 1000 / 600

Orange 370/200

Peach 400 / 300

Pepper (sweet) 420/300

Patata 250/160

String Bean 500 / 360

Tomato 110 / 70

Water melon 100 / 70

Fraud, boycott mark last day of Chechenya vote

GROZNY, Russia (AFP) — Fraud and a widespread boycott marked the tense final day of voting Sunday in Chechen local elections which rebel forces have denounced as a violation of their peace accord with Russia.

The leader of the local government administering Russian-held territory, Doku Zavgayev, told ITAR-TASS news agency that more than 50 per cent of voters had participated, making the election valid.

But evidence on the ground suggested that the elections, which Mr. Zavgayev insisted on holding even though they were postponed under the June 10 peace accord, had attracted little support.

A polling station in the Microrayon district of the capital Grozny, large parts of which were destroyed during a Russian offensive last year, had been raked by gunfire overnight, officials there said.

Police guard Assanbek Matuyev said the shots were fired by "young local handits" and not the separatist forces, who have so far hacked off a threat to disrupt the voting with violence and ignore the rest of the peace accord.

"If that had been the separatists there would have been nothing left of this school house today," Mr. Matuyev said, admitting, like many members of the theoretically pro-Russian police in Grozny, that he too fought against the Russians at the start of the war.

The Electoral Commission chairman said that at most a third of registered voters had cast ballots at this particular polling centre in the three days of voting. In addition to the local voting, there were also ballots for the Russian presidential elections taking place Sunday.

Russian state television announced that almost 100 per cent of the more than 40,000 soldiers deployed in Chechenya to fight the separatists had cast votes.

But elsewhere it was clear that the elections were not going smoothly.

Marina Didigova, an Electoral Commis-

sion official, said nothing when two foreign journalists, including one from AFP, placed ballots in the urns, carefully writing down their European passport numbers on a "supplementary" election list which covers unregistered voters.

"Anyone who wants can come and vote, but you can only vote once," Ms. Didigova said.

Chechen rebels attacked a Russian mine-clearing unit Sunday northwest of Grozny as voting was under way in the Russian presidential election and for a local legislature, Interfax said.

The attack left five Russian troops injured and one Chechen separatist dead, the agency quoted the Russian command in Chechenya as saying.

The command said the situation was otherwise calm in Chechenya.

Field Commander Doku Makhayev told AFP in Gekhi, southwestern Chechenya, that "we will not try to do anything" until after Monday.

Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said Sunday that the new Chechen legislature should have a term of no more than two years. He said the same should apply to Chechen president Zavgayev, elected in December in voting marred by irregularities and boycotted in rebel-held areas.

"After two years, there will be new elections," Mr. Chernomyrdin said, adding talks among the Chechens themselves were needed to end the war.

Mr. Chernomyrdin also pledged to uphold the peace accord signed last week, which calls for a Russian troop withdrawal linked to rebel disarmament.

The war began in December 1994 when Russian sent troops and armour pouring into Chechenya to crush a three-year-old independence drive. The fighting has left some 40,000 people dead, most of them civilians.

Thousands of Japanese protest U.S. use of Okinawa-alternative firing range

TOKYO (AFP) — Thousands of residents in Yamanashi prefecture, central Japan, rallied Sunday against a possible transfer of live-fire U.S. military drills from Okinawa to a firing range in their back yard.

About 3,800 people rallied against U.S. military use of the Japanese military's Kitafuji Firing Range, located in the prefecture on the northern side of Mt. Fuji, Kyodo News Agency said.

The range is one of nine Ground Self-Defence Force sites suggested as substitutes for one on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa.

As part of a bilateral agreement reached in April to reduce Okinawa's heavy burden of U.S. military facilities, the U.S. military plans to relocate an Okinawan artillery exercise range.

Exercises at the latter, which involve the

firing of live ammunition across a highway, are particularly unpopular with Okinawans as they require the closure of a 3.7 kilometre stretch of the highway.

The U.S. military will have studied all nine alternative sites being considered by the end of the month, the news agency said.

The decision to relocate the firing range and other U.S. military facilities in Okinawa came after heated campaigns against the U.S. military presence there, fuelled by the rape of a 12-year-old Okinawan girl by three U.S. servicemen last September.

Okinawa, which accounts for only 0.6 per cent of Japan's total land area, is home to about 28,000 of 47,000 U.S. troops deployed in Japan, as well as three quarters of all U.S. military facilities.

Report: British stole French naval secrets

LONDON (R) — Britain's Foreign Intelligence Service (M16) stole top-secret breakthrough technology the French had developed for tracking nuclear submarines, a British newspaper reported Sunday.

The Sunday Times said in a front-page report that details of France's anti-submarine warfare programme were obtained last year from a French civilian engineer duped by the M16 spy organisation.

The report said the engineer, who was not named, gave details of a breakthrough in anti-submarine warfare to a company that posed as a technical defence consultancy and publishing house but was actually an M16 front.

The breakthrough was a remote sensing device said to be capable of tracking submarines from a satellite that was thought to use a laser beam or radar to scan the ocean surface and read tiny changes in water flow, according to the report.

British officials were not immediately available to comment on the Sunday Times report.

Australia premier heckled by gun owners at noisy rally

SYDNEY (R) — A crowd of about 5,000 gun owners heckled Australian Prime Minister John Howard in rural Victoria Sunday as he began a campaign to explain the government's crackdown on firearms.

Mr. Howard told gun owners that federal and state governments would not back down from proposed gun laws following the shooting deaths of 35 people at Port Arthur in April.

Speakers at the noisy rally questioned why farmers and sporting shooters should give up their weapons. Some members of the rally gave Nazi salutes during Mr. Howard's speech, while others tried to drown him out with chanting.

The prime minister pressed on, saying said the gun laws had to be intro-

duced but that they could not guarantee a safe future.

"I don't pretend for a moment, ladies and gentlemen, that the decision that we have taken is going to guarantee that in the future there won't be other mass murders. I don't pretend that for a moment."

"What I do argue to you, my friends, is that it will significantly reduce the likelihood of those occurring in the future," Mr. Howard said.

Federal and state governments decided in May to prohibit almost all self-loading weapons, such as military-style semi-automatic rifles, and restrict other powerful weapons to people who had a very strong need for them — for example, farmers with no other means of vermin control.

Under the new regulations, which the states are progressively implementing, sporting shooters will be allowed to possess only the least lethal weapons, such as shotguns and .22 calibre rim-fire rifles.

All guns must be registered and the government will buy back those that become unlawful.

The government began a campaign Saturday to explain the changes to gun ownership laws, placing newspaper advertisements criticising the misinformation by pro-gun campaigners.

Mr. Howard said the majority of Australians wanted a ban on automatic and semi-automatic weapons.



Commander in Chief of the Russian Armed Forces in Chechenya General Vechislav Tikhomirov leaves the secret ballot booth before casting his vote in the village of Hankala Sunday. The election is being boycotted in many rebel-held areas of Chechenya but pro-Moscow officials said Sunday they still hoped for a 50 per cent turnout. (Reuters photo)

Over 100 killed in India pre-cyclone rains

HYDERABAD, India (R) — South India was lashed for a third day Sunday by torrential rains that have killed more than 100 people and driven hundreds from their homes, and an approaching cyclone was threatening more devastation.

The dead were spread across three states — Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka — and more than 180 fishermen were also reported missing.

The tropical cyclone, moving in from the Bay of Bengal, was expected to strike the mainland overnight before slowing down, meteorological experts said in the southern city of Hyderabad.

H.S. Brahma, Andhra Pradesh's relief commissioner, said the storm, dubbed Tropical Cyclone (3B), packed winds of around 60 kilometres an hour — down from earlier estimates of 100 kilometres.

The cyclone was heading first for the 150-kilometre southeastern coastal stretch between Kalingapatnam Port and Vishakhapatnam, the centre of South Asia's largest shipping yard.

Nearly six million people, mostly fishermen and farmers, live in the area.

Officials said police personnel and relief workers were already stationed at various strategic locations, ready to put evacuation plans into effect.

"We have already evacuated several hundred families. The cyclone may not be as dangerous as we earlier expected but we are taking no chances," an official in Vishakhapatnam said.

P.V. Rama Rao, director of Hyderabad's Meteorological Centre, said the cyclone, after touching Andhra Pradesh would move towards Puri, a seaside tourist spot in the eastern state of Orissa, 1,500 kilometres southeast of New Delhi.

The coast of Andhra Pradesh, on the eastern side of the subcontinent from Bombay, is particularly prone to cyclones. In 1977 about 10,000 people died when tidal waves swept 12 kilometres inland. In 1990, nearly 1,000 were killed when a cyclone with winds of up to 250 kilometres struck the coast.

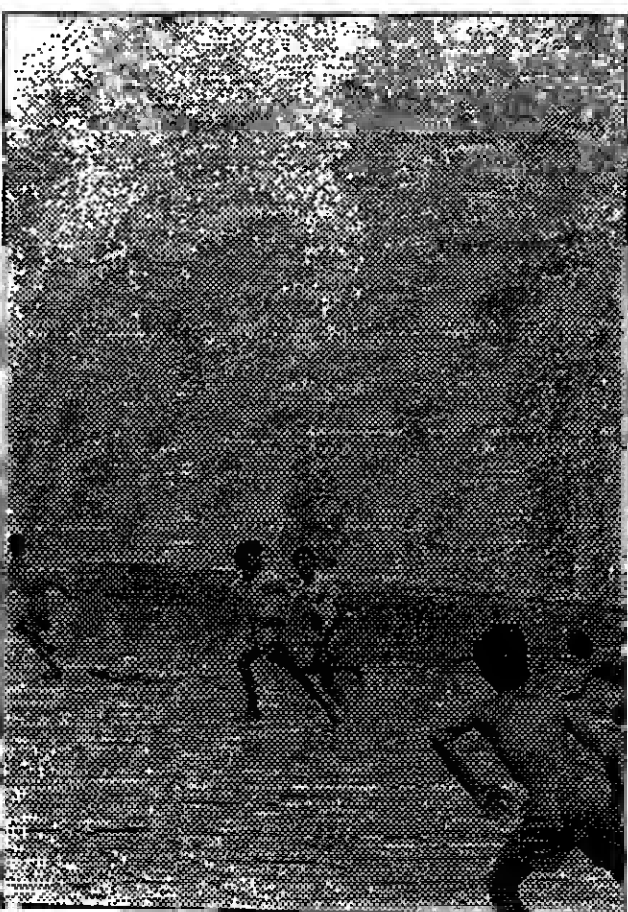
In the past three days in Andhra Pradesh, at least 60 people died in storms and rains, with at least 30 swept away by raging torrents of rainwater. Another dozen people died after being struck by lightning, officials said.

More than 500 houses were damaged in coastal areas and nearly 200 families displaced. Roadside kiosks, brick houses and huts were destroyed.

In some districts, including Madanapally and Saidpet, flash floods disrupted transport and communication facilities.

In Madanapally, a young woman engineer, Nandana, due to be married in a few days, climbed a tree to save herself after water flooded the ground floor of her home. She lost her footing and was swallowed by the swirling waters.

At least 30 people were killed in Tamil Nadu state, where motorboats, a Dornier aircraft and helicopters managed to rescue 66 of 250 fishermen missing for two days.



Children run from a giant wave as it lashes a popular sea-front promenade in Bombay Sunday as most of southern India was placed on red alert following a warning that a cyclone moving in from the Bay of Bengal would hit the south-eastern coast. (Reuters photo)

S. Korea calls off search for 26 missing seamen

SEOUL (R) — All 26 crew members aboard a Cypriot-registered cargo vessel were missing and feared dead after it sank off South Korea following a collision with a Greek ship, maritime police said Sunday.

They said the 14,900-ton Anna Spiratos sank after the collision with the 14,312-ton Greek-registered Polydefkis P in dense fog Saturday night.

Rescue vessels from South Korea and Japan raced to the area where the Cypriot vessel, with a mainly Filipino crew, went down, but the fog hampered their search.

Visibility was so poor that helicopters could not be used. The officer said the rescue team found one life jacket, two empty rubber rafts and other personal belongings, which were believed to come from the sunken ship.

"We will call off the search at 6:00 p.m. (0900 GMT) as the visibility is getting poorer due to heavy fog. But we will resume the rescue work very early tomorrow morning," a maritime officer said by telephone from South Korea's port city of Pusan.

"We fear all the missing crew members are dead." The missing crew members included Lemos Icanis, the captain of the vessel, 24 Filipinos and one Egyptian, the Pusan authorities said.

A maritime officer said the collision occurred about 32 kilometres southeast of Pusan. But Japan's Maritime Safety Agency placed the site of the accident in the Tushima Straits, about 80 kilometres off Pusan.

The Polydefkis was towed by South Korean vessels into Pusan Sunday. All 12 crew members were reported safe.

"About 14 ships from the navy and maritime police were immediately sent to the site. A search is still in progress but we're having difficulty because of dense fog," another maritime officer said.

South Korean ships sprayed dispersant in the area to cope with an oil spill from the sunken ship, which was carrying 300 tonnes of oil, including 227 tonnes of bunker-C oil, the officer said.

He said an oil slick had spread about 1.6 kilometres from the sunken ship but was optimistic it could be dispersed or retrieved.

Pusan police were examining shipping documents provided by the agent of the Greek ship.

"We will question crew members of the Greek ship tomorrow in cooperation with its agent," he added.

Both vessels were carrying iron ore and the Cypriot ship was on its way to China from Russia, maritime police said.

On Sunday, Inchon Maritime Police arrested Joergen Fogh Larsen, the Danish captain of a Danish-flagged cargo ship, over a collision involving a South Korean trawler.

Five South Korean fishermen of the small fishing boat were missing after the collision with the 1,829-ton Arktis Sirius off the port city of Inchon Tuesday.

Saturday's collision was the latest in a string of shipping accidents in busy sea lanes off South Korea.

In April, a small Belize-registered cargo ship hope sank after a collision with a South Korean-registered freighter. All crew members were rescued.

In August last year seven seamen perished after a South Korean cargo vessel sank following a collision with another local ship in dense fog.

Two months earlier 27 crew members were reported missing after their Liberian-registered cargo vessel was in collision with a South Korean ship in the East China Sea. They included 10 Filipinos, nine Israelis, five Romanians and three Belgians.

An era ends as Sicily elects new assembly

ROME (R) — Sicilians voted Sunday in elections for the island's powerful regional assembly — an important test of both Italy's new political establishment and the strength of the battered mafia.

Some 4.4 million people were eligible to vote in a poll expected to end an era in which Sicily was dominated for almost five decades by the now discredited Christian Democratic Party.

Since Sicily's last regional election in 1991, the political landscape has been transformed by corruption investigations which destroyed Italy's post-World War II party system.

Organised crime has also been shaken to its roots by an anti-mafia drive which has brought the arrest of hundreds of mob members, including boss-of-bosses Salvatore "The Beast" Riina.

Giulio Andreotti, prime minister seven times and a symbol of the Christian Democrats' post-war grip on Italy, is now on trial for collusion with the mafia, which he denies.

Of the 90 deputies in the outgoing assembly, 52 have been under investigation in various mafia and graft probes. The last remnants of this political old guard are expected to be swept away in Sunday's vote, but many commentators argue that the election will not provide the economically depressed southern Italian island with the sort of stability it needs.

Some 1,436 candidates from 145 parties are vying for the 90 assembly seats under a proportional representation system.

"This election gives us the chance to see exactly how the various parties are doing in the most important test since the April general election," said the financial daily Il Sole 24 Ore. "It also risks providing another ungovernable regional assembly."

At the April elections, the centre-left Olive Tree Coalition triumphed nationwide, but was beaten in Sicily by media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi's centre-right Freedom Alliance.

Mr. Berlusconi has campaigned actively in Sicily, looking to kickstart his flagging political fortunes, but the centre-left has warned islanders that if they turn to the centre-right again, they risk being left out in the cold.

"Sicily can take a step forward and become a player in the new national game or else be condemned to be marginalised," Massimo D'Alema, leader of the former communist Democratic Party of the Left, told a rally on the island last week.

Besides the main parties, just over 50 independent groups are standing for election, demanding greater self-determination for Sicily, which already enjoys a large degree of autonomy.

The Italian constitution says the Palermo-based assembly can write its own laws on industry and agriculture as well as band out lucrative public works contracts.

The mafia has traditionally made itself rich by controlling the local building industry and ensuring friendly politicians pushed contracts its way.

Many commentators believe mafia influence in the corridors of power has been curtailed by the recent anti-corruption campaign, but newspapers reported last week that feared mafia godfather Giovanni Brusca, shortly before his arrest last month, handed out instructions on which of the new parties to support.

Rumours have swirled about the identity of these parties, with politicians pointing the finger at their opponents.

Sicilians were also voting for numerous local councils and some mayors. First results were expected Monday.

Tory right-wingers attack Diana

LONDON (AFP) — Right-wingers in Britain's ruling Conservative Party have criticised Princess Diana for her "self-absorption" and called on her to divorce from the Prince of Wales as quickly as possible, press reports said Sunday. They quoted an anonymous editorial in the magazine Way Forward, organ of a group headed by former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, that said the princess had a "voracious appetite" for the perks of royal life.

"The Princess of Wales has steadily forfeited the sympathy she so skillfully built up over the last years," the article said. "Her self-absorption has become increasingly apparent and it is time to separate her irrevocably from the core of the institution which had earlier been so ready to embrace her." It added, "The future of the monarchy is the Prince of Wales and his future thereafter is Prince William (Charles and Diana's elder son). She may remain an excellent mother, but for the rest of us she is not much of a princess."

The editor of the magazine, Tory Member of Parliament George Gardiner, said the comment was designed to stimulate debate.

Italian wins Monaco piano competition

MONTE CARLO (AFP) — Italian pianist Giovanni Bellucci, 30, won the \$30,000 prize in the annual Monte Carlo Masters Contest at the end of a week of high-level competition.

Bellucci's interpretation of Franz Liszt's Dance of Death was preferred to the same composer's Concerto for Left Hand by Francois Killian of France. The competition, which requires performers to be on stage for up to five hours, brings together the winners of recent major international contests. The 16 finalists from 11 countries shared 19 major grand prizes, nine second prizes and five third prizes.

Catholic masses Barred at Tower of London

LONDON (AFP) — A Roman Catholic group has been barred from celebrating mass at the Tower of London in memory of Catholic martyrs, apparently on the orders of Queen Elizabeth II and the Lord Chancellor, the Daily Telegraph has reported. The group, dedicated to veneration of the 16th century martyr Saint John Fisher, celebrated eucharist in the Tower cell where he was imprisoned before his execution under Henry VIII in 1535. The services were held on June 22, Saint John Fisher's Day, from 1991 until 1994, when the then governor of the Tower, Major General Christopher Tyler, said they would no longer be allowed, according to the Telegraph. The group's leader, retired railway executive Peter Bearcroft, told the paper he believed that the service had the support of Gen. Tyler, who as a Catholic himself was allowed to hear mass privately. But when Mr. Bearcroft asked to hold a separate mass in the chapel of Saint Peter Ad Vincula, which stands within the Tower's grounds and holds the bones of other Catholic martyrs, he was told that as it was a Chapel Royal, and only the queen could give permission. He was then told by the queen's private secretary, Robert Fellowes, that if he applied in writing the matter would be raised with the queen herself, the Telegraph said. He received a reply that the requested mass could not be permitted "because of the problems this would create for the governor." Some days later, Gen. Tyler told Mr. Bearcroft that, after a telephone conversation with the Lord Chancellor he could permit no further masses at the tower.

June 17, 1996
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Rescue services search the debris following a bomb blast which ripped through Manchester city centre injuring over 200 people Saturday (Reuters photo)

Manchester blast raises fears of split in IRA

BELFAST (R) — A bomb that ripped through Manchester city centre Saturday has deepened gloom about prospects for a new ceasefire by the IRA and raised concerns that the guerrilla body may be divided within itself.

On both sides of the Irish Sea, politicians and security experts blamed the Irish Republican Army (IRA) for the blast in the northern England city which injured more than 200 people.

It was a blow to hopes that multi-party talks which began in Belfast last Monday might solve some of the intractable problems which have burdened British-ruled Northern Ireland for decades.

The shadowy commanders of the IRA, which has been fighting for 25 years to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, maintained an ominous silence in the hours after the explosion.

But politicians and the media speculated that the blast, the sixth in mainland Britain since Feb. 9 and the first for seven weeks, was evidence of a split in the Republican movement, which embraces the IRA and its political arm, Sinn Fein.

"The Manchester bombing points to a split between Republicans committed to the peace process and hardliners intent on violence," the London newspaper The Observer said.

Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring agreed, "There's speculation that it may be (the work of) a breakaway (group). That leads us facing a new difficulty," he told Sky Television.

"We had always felt over the last number of years we were dealing with the leadership, with people who were trying to bring the IRA into democratic politics.

"But the situation I think could now be a very difficult in

the sense that we do not know who we are actually dealing with," Mr. Spring said.

He added that the Irish cabinet would meet in Dublin Tuesday to review its relationship with Sinn Fein in the light of the bombing. Irish government officials have been keeping up a dialogue with Sinn Fein to try to get an IRA ceasefire.

In Belfast, Republican sources would not comment on a report in the Sunday Life newspaper that three hardline IRA units in areas along the border with the Irish Republic were threatening to break ranks with a leadership accused of going soft in favour of politics.

British security sources have been saying for more than a year that IRA units in rural Northern Ireland never wanted an 18-month ceasefire the guerrilla leaders called in September 1994 and which ended with a bomb in London in February.

That truck bomb, which killed two civilians, was planned months in advance and the vehicle was driven from the Republican hotbed of South Armagh, on the Northern Ireland-Irish border, according to British security insiders.

The IRA said it went back to war because Britain had double-crossed it by refusing to bring Sinn Fein into peace talks. Britain and Ireland are adamant that they will not allow Sinn Fein into the talks until the guerrillas abandon violence.

But every bomb that goes off stiffens the resolve of pro-British Protestant Unionist politicians not to negotiate with Republicans while they have a guerrilla army lurking in the shadows.

"They can only come to the table on terms of votes, not on the terms of guns and bombs," David Trimble, leader of the powerful Ulster Unionist Party told Reuters.

Senate committee cites Hillary Clinton's part in Whitewater case

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Republican-controlled Senate committee probing the Whitewater case has concluded that President Bill Clinton's wife Hillary acted to prevent damaging documents surfacing following the death of a White House aide, press reports said Sunday.

The Washington Post, the New York Times and the CNN television channel all quoted extracts from the committee's report due to be published Tuesday.

Following the suicide of deputy White House counsel Vince Foster in 1993, "the evidence strongly suggests that Mrs. Clinton... dispatched her trusted lieutenants to contain any potential embarrassment or political damage," the report was quoted as saying.

The White House prevented police officers and federal agents from entering Foster's office immediately after his death.

Assistants to Mrs. Clinton as well as former White House counsel Bernard Nussbaum were questioned by the committee last year about the removal of documents from Foster's office the day after his death.

The committee report was quoted as saying that their statements were "inaccurate and incomplete, unbelievable, highly implausible, (almost) contemptuous, in order to conceal Mrs. Clinton's pivotal role in the decisions surrounding the handling of Foster's documents following his death."

Congressional sources quoted by the post said several aides could be charged with perjury.

A former law partner of Mrs. Clinton, Foster had been under a great deal of pressure in his job and was held responsible for some early Clinton administration missteps.

But he also handled the Clintons' affairs in the Whitewater real estate venture which is linked to an Arkansas bank that failed, necessitating a taxpayer-funded bailout.

The 700-page Senate committee report says Mrs. Clinton, her chief of staff Margaret Williams and political friend Susan Thomases took part in formulating the procedure for access to Foster's office after his death, CNN said.

In the hearings, the two women denied they coordinated any effort to restrict access to the office and Ms. Williams contradicted the testimony of a Secret Service guard who said he saw her remove materials from the office.

Democrats on the Senate committee are preparing their own counter-report, while the White House late Saturday criticised the leaks to the press.

Another trial connected to the convoluted Whitewater affair is set to begin Monday in Arkansas, where two men are accused of illegally funneling bank money to Mr. Clinton's 1990 campaign for Arkansas governor.

Mr. Clinton is set to testify in the case via videotape, as he did in another recent trial that ended with three convictions.

Polls have shown, however, that so far the Whitewater scandal has not caused Mr. Clinton much political damage and Democrats have accused the Republican-controlled Senate committee of engaging in a witchhunt.

Dole criticises Clinton's Russian policy

WASHINGTON (R) — Bob Dole said Saturday as Russians began voting for president that U.S. relations with Moscow must be based on American interests and values and not on any individual.

The likely Republican U.S. presidential nominee said in a statement that "if democratic forces prevail in Russia's first direct presidential elections, as I hope they will, it will be an important victory for democracy."

But he said that no matter who wins, "America has to pursue our interests." He added: "I believe our interests have been neglected."

Sen. Dole said that for too long President Bill Clinton had ignored or excused troubling Russian behaviour toward other independent states of the former Soviet Union.

He said Mr. Clinton treated the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe as appendages of his Russia policy and delayed real action in enlarging NATO by putting Russian threats ahead of the aspirations of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

Apparently referring to Mr. Clinton's support of Russian President Boris Yeltsin over the Communist Gennady Zyuganov, Sen. Dole said: "Our relationship with Russia must be based on our interests and our values — not on any one individual."

"U.S. romanticism toward Russia should not be replaced with resignation but with realism about the problems we face."

Investigators blame Indonesia plane blaze on fuel tank rupture

FUKUOKA, Japan (R) — Investigators looking into an Indonesian airliner crash believe the plane's passenger cabin caught fire from a fuel tank that ruptured when the takeoff was suddenly aborted by engine trouble.

Sources close to the investigation team said the finding cleared up one mystery of the accident last Thursday in which three passengers died and 110 were injured at this southern Japanese airport.

They said there had been uncertainty about whether the engine problem itself sparked the blaze or whether the mechanical problem was not directly linked to the blaze.

Observation of the crash site showed that in the sudden braking of the plane when the pilot realised there was an engine problem,

the full fuel tank on the right wing cracked, spewing out fuel.

The Garuda Indonesia DC-10, carrying 260 passengers and 15 crew, had just lifted a few metres into the air on takeoff when it flopped back to earth and skidded off the runway with the passenger cabin ablaze.

Passengers jumped from the cabin as the flames spread.

The plane was carrying mostly Japanese on a flight to the Indonesia island resort of Bali.

The sources said investigators found that the pilot had applied reverse thrust to all three engines — one under each wing and one in the tail — in trying to halt the aircraft.

Miracle no one died in Manchester bomb blast, police chief says

MANCHESTER, England (R) — A senior British police officer said Sunday it was a miracle no one had been killed by a suspected IRA bomb that ripped through central Manchester Saturday, injuring more than 200 people.

Standing amidst the rubble of the Arndale Shopping Centre, which was destroyed by the huge bomb, Assistant Chief Constable Colin Phillips said the device was at least as big as any that had exploded in Britain since the Irish Republican Army (IRA) ended a ceasefire in February.

"The people who did this were absolutely evil criminals... It is a complete miracle that no one was killed," he told reporters.

The bomb, planted in a small truck in this northern English city, threw Northern Irish peace talks into new disarray. Some 16 people were still in hospital Sunday but none was in serious condition.

Mr. Phillips said parts of the truck had been found half a 800 metres away from the scene of the blast.

He said the bomb was "no smaller" than the one which exploded at Canary Wharf in East London in February, killing two people, which marked the end of the ceasefire.

The Manchester bomb exploded in late morning, when the streets were packed with shoppers and tourists visiting for the European Soccer Championships.

Some 45,000 people were expected at Manchester's Old Trafford stadium later Sunday for a match between Germany and Russia. Police who had been worried about boogalomanism will now also be on heightened alert for guerrilla activity.

The IRA has not claimed responsibility for the bombing, but police are operating on the assumption that it was their work.

Mr. Phillips said they were examining video footage from security cameras and hoped to identify those responsible.

British Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine told BBC Television: "It is a shattering piece of news. It is inhuman behaviour." His condemnation followed similar words from Prime Minister John Major Saturday.

Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring said his government would review its relationship with the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein, when it meets Tuesday.

The bomb dashed hopes that Sinn Fein would call a new ceasefire, enabling it to join talks on the future of Northern Ireland, which began Monday. Its leader, Gerry Adams, said he regretted the explosion, but refused to denounce it.

"The talks have started and what do we get in return," Mr. Spring told BBC Television. "We get an outrageous act by people who are not acting on behalf of the Irish people at home or abroad."

Northern Ireland Unionist politicians, who want British rule of the province to continue, demanded the British government break off all contact with Sinn Fein.

Much of Manchester's centre remained cordoned off Sunday and Mr. Phillips said it would be two or three days before the area of the bomb, marked by a crater 12 metres wide and 4.5 metres deep, would reopen to the public.

The chairman of the all-party talks on Northern Ireland, former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, condemned late Saturday the



A police-issued photo from a security camera shows the seven-tonne Ford lorry which exploded in Manchester city centre June 15 (Reuters photo)

bomb blast in Manchester.

"We strongly and unequivocally condemn today's bombing," Sen. Mitchell said in a joint statement issued with his two aides, former Canadian General John De Chastelain and former Finnish Prime Minister Harri Holkeri.

"This reprehensible act comes at a crucial time, just days after multi-party talks began," he said, adding, "We believe that the way to peace is not through violence but rather through meaningful dialogue."

In Washington, U.S. President Bill Clinton expressed outrage at the attack, calling it a "brutal and cowardly act of terrorism."

He said it "underscores the need for all of us to join together to fight terrorism and violence in all parts of the world."

Mr. Clinton noted that the talks aimed at ending the conflict over Northern Ireland had begun in Belfast, and that the people of Northern Ireland had voted to send representatives to those talks.

"The men of violence have once again tried to dash their hopes," he said. "I want the people, who have so much at stake in those talks, to know that the United States will stand with them in their continuing search for peace."

Queen Elizabeth II said earlier that was "shocked and deeply saddened" by the incident and sent "deep sympathy for all those who were injured and to their families."

Northern Ireland's main Unionist parties, which want to maintain the province under British rule, said the all-party talks should go on even without Sinn Fein.

Moderate Catholic politicians also signalled doubts about the commitment of Sinn Fein to persuading the IRA to renew the 17-month ceasefire it broke off in February.

Music world mourns loss of Ella Fitzgerald

LOS ANGELES (R) — The music world Sunday was mourning the loss of jazz legend Ella Fitzgerald, who died at her Beverly Hills home after a singing career that spanned six decades.

Fitzgerald died Saturday surrounded by friends and family. She was 78 and had been suffering from complications of diabetes, a condition that led to the amputation of both of her legs below the knee in 1993.

As word of her death spread, top entertainers and jazz aficionados paid loving tribute to America's "first lady of song," with many predicting jazz music would never see her equal.

"She's just irreplaceable," said Don Heckman, jazz writer for the Los Angeles Times.

Mr. Heckman said that in the hierarchy of jazz singers, Fitzgerald was at the top of the list — along with fellow legends Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan and Carmen McRae.

Mr. Heckman called Fitzgerald an "absolute natural" who demonstrated an unmatched clarity and tone despite her lack of formal training.

"She had none of the little stylistic mannerisms that sometimes got in the way of other singers," he said. "With Ella it was always just pure vocal expression — which is one of the reasons songwriters just loved her."

Mr. Heckman said Fitzgerald's influence could be heard in the singing of such popular vocalists as Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Mel Tormé.

"She showed me the way," Tormé told KFWB-AM Radio. "She was the pathfinder. She was the best singer on the planet."

"She was the lady who taught us all how to sing," Bennett said. "She was the spirit."

Fitzgerald, who recorded more than 250 albums over a 60-year career, got her first break at the age of 15, when a member of the Chick Webb Orchestra heard her sing during amateur night at the Apollo Theatre in New York.

Her early recordings with titles such as I'll Chase The Blues Away and A Little Bit Later On rank among the classics of early jazz and are now collectors' items.

In 1938 she recorded a song that would win her world fame — a novelty ditty called A Tisket-A Tasket which one of Webb's arrangers composed based on a nursery rhyme. It would become one of her standards.

In the 1940s, Fitzgerald perfected a style that came to be known as scat singing, in which she would improvise wordlessly with her voice to give the effect of an instrumental soloist.

She remained at the forefront of jazz and popular music for decades to come, until health problems began to slow her down in the mid-1980s.

In 1993 complications of Fitzgerald's diabetes forced her to undergo the amputation of both legs below the knees, a time that Tormé recalled as "tragic."

"I knew when that happened that she would probably never sing again," he said. "And that in itself is an enormous loss to all of us."

Cabaret singer Bobby Short recalled that Fitzgerald dis-



Jazz singing legend Ella Fitzgerald died Sunday at her Beverly Hills home, a family spokesman said. Fitzgerald, 78, who had been in poor health in recent years and had both legs amputated below the knees in 1993, was known as the "First Lady of Song" and had a career that spanned some sixty years (Reuters photo)

played a "marvelous sort of innate feeling for jazz and perfect diction" that made her the envy of less accomplished performers.

"Singers everywhere took on her jazz mannerisms, her jazz phrasings, the way she went about imposing the jazz feeling on a popular song," he told CBS Radio Network.

Within hours of Fitzgerald's death, a wreath was placed on her star on Hollywood "Walk of Fame" as fans and well-wishers gathered.

Organisers of the annual Playboy Jazz Festival, which featured Fitzgerald at its 1959 debut, dedicated this weekend's show to her.

Comedian Bill Cosby, a friend of Fitzgerald's, took the stage at the Hollywood Bowl and solemnly asked the crowd: "Can we just have one short moment of silence for Miss Ella Fitzgerald?"

Jordan Times

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The missing element

THE SECOND Euro-Islam conference, recently held at Al al Bayt University, concluded its deliberations on how to bring Islam and Christianity closer to each other since they are after all two of the three monotheistic faiths and share many common spiritual ideals. In the same vein, the Vatican and Cairo's Al Azhar moved closer towards the establishment of a joint committee for the purpose of promoting a dialogue and enhancing harmony between Islam and Christianity. These and other similar efforts to forge better relations between Christianity and Islam deserve to be commended especially at a time when there is a widespread "Islamophobia" in most if not all of the Western world where Christianity is the dominant religion. The fear of Islam and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism have even prompted some Western intellectuals to view Islam as the new enemy in the wake of the collapse of the communist order in Russia and other East European nations.

What is incomprehensible in this context, though, is the absence of any dialogue with Judaism at a time when there is a rise in religious fundamentalism in Israel that culminated in an unprecedented increase in political power for religious and ultra-religious parties in the Jewish state. With religion playing an ever more important role in the political life of Israel and in the shaping of the future of the peace process, there is an urgent need to broaden the current Christian-Islamic dialogue to reach out for Judaism as well.

Given the fact that much of the headline positions that the Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu is going to adopt are attributable to doctrinaire and religious values, it would seem logical to engage Judaism in the dialogue in a bid to lessen the political fervour of radical groups within the Israeli society especially when they seem to exercise so much clout over the destiny of their country and people.

Therefore, we see a great deal of wisdom in holding a tripartite religious conference as soon as possible that would aim at and seek to lessen tension and hostility between religions. Peace in the Middle East can never attain its ultimate goal without striking a cord of harmony and understanding between Islam and Judaism. The culture of peace that we are talking about and seeking is after all based on religious precepts that have got to be rendered more enlightened across the board. Israel is the only "Western" country where there is no separation between "church and state." This makes the necessity of engaging Judaism in a dialogue all the more pressing.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

APART FROM the Arab Nation's stand vis-à-vis the new government in Israel and its declared hostile policies towards peace, a host of other important issues await the coming Arab summit meeting in Cairo, said Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer for Al Ra'i. Of course, one of the priorities will be ending the differences among the Arab governments whose relations were strained in the wake of the Gulf crisis, but the Arab World's relations with Turkey, Iran and Israel are also expected to figure high on the agenda in view of their impact on the region as a whole, said the writer. For its part, Iran has its own influence in Lebanon and subsequently is influencing the Israeli-Arab relations because the Iranian-backed Hizbollah continues to escalate tension through its repeated resistance attacks on the Jewish state, while Turkey, which recently concluded a military pact with Israel, is causing tension in the north as a result of its adamant position with regard to river waters sharing with Iraq and Syria, according to the writer. He said the Arab countries' relations with Israel are bound to come up in the meeting since they are directly affected, positively or negatively, by Israel's policies. Only if the Cairo summit is able to handle these issues with wisdom and with resolve, and when the Arab leaders arrive at the minimum level of coordination among their countries vis-à-vis the common challenges can the coming meeting be considered a success, concluded the writer.

Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

The plight of Jordanian tour agents

THE TOURISM ministry has recently placed several new requirements on tourism agents which it believes are fair "based on the ministry's past experiences with the sector". These regulations, which I delineate below, must be viewed by any rational observer as reckless, arrogant, lazy and unnecessary, and deserve to be revised quickly and possibly removed.

Tourism agents have recently challenged in court the new regulations imposed on them by the Ministry of Tourism. The new regulations which were issued on April 1, 1996, require agents that only sell travel tickets to provide an annual bank guarantee of JD 25,000 to the Ministry of Tourism along with their application for a new licence or licence renewal. Those agents who organise tours must provide bank guarantee of JD 50,000.

Tourism agents already provide guarantees to their counterparts. Why is this regulation necessary? Is the tourism ministry going to start guaranteeing people's satisfaction and refund their money if they are not pleased with something they saw in Jordan? Or is this another way to impose taxes and divert money away from domestic savings and investments? It stands to reason that the answer must be the latter.

To make life slightly harder for tourism agents, they are now required to renew their licences yearly. Why? What does it serve to have businesspeople close down their businesses to spend hours after hours at the labyrinths of some bureaucratic procedure? Why do Jordanians claim they want to fight corruption when they impose greater regulations and requirements on the average businessperson?

The cost of the time spent waiting in some queue to obtain a licence could be better spent generating foreign currency and employment opportunities for a job-starved economy. Besides, small businesses will have to close down in order to follow up on their paperwork because these businesses are owner-operated, and thus the owner will have to shut down while seeking unnecessary governmental sanctions. On the other hand, large businesses can afford to hire a full-time employee whose main function is to chase after governmental paperwork. Therefore, the new regulations are making life harder for those starting entrepreneurs and encouraging the large tourism agencies to become even larger.

Additionally, the new regulations require that tourism companies have a starting capital of JD 50,000 or more. I am still to find a reasonable objective why they must have this sum of money to start operations. The day has passed for baseless, punitive and corruption creating legislation.

Unfortunately, many businesses will close if this regulation holds in court. Its effect will be to close down the small and medium businesses and to generate greater monopolies in a country that offers protection from monopolistic practices neither to consumers nor to producers.

Another requirement of the new legislation is that the agents must insure incoming tourists even though tourists are traditionally insured by carriers, hotels and transport companies. Why must Jordanian companies spend additional money on insurance when they are already providing guarantees to almost everybody? Their counterparts across the river must hail this legislation as either an indication of domestic inefficiencies and excessive hazards or as an invitation not to cooperate with Jordanian businesses because then they too would be subject to higher costs for doing business in Jordan. Thus, direct foreign investment is driven away from Jordan and domestic agents will be unable to compete with other tourism agents, not only across the river, but possibly all over the globe.

Furthermore, under the new legislation the agents must provide the Ministry of Tourism with copies of the agreements they make with foreign agencies, which in a way is a most absurd requirement. Does the government enjoin similar requirements of other forms of business? I do not think so. Then why do so in the case of tourism? Besides, what does this procedure serve? Absolutely nothing and it simply over-burdens the business sector with more bureaucratic mumbo jumbo that hurts the economy and improves nothing.

If the Ministry of Tourism really wants to help, then it should concentrate on its role as facilitator by providing the infrastructure for tourism and not become the judge and jury, two very easy roles that require no creativity or additional work only the continuance of past practices.

The obstacles to reaping the full potential of tourism in Jordan were already highlighted last week by Kiyaki Takakuwa, a member of the Japanese study team for developing tourism in Jordan. These problems included bad signs, lack of modern visitor facilities, lack of on-site maps and free information leaflets, lack of adequate visitor centres and lack of transparency on guide fees.

Somebody once said: "If it is not broke, make it better". In other words, one should always strive to improve things even if they are going well, which means that the Ministry of Tourism should concentrate on streamlining procedures not on adding to them. The market should not be sacrificed just to create more power to the bureaucrats. In fact, the reverse should happen.

LETTERS

Favouritism is not favoured

not on the pages of a serious newspaper.

Michael Rymek,
Amman.

To the Editor:

MOST OF the time, one needs not be qualified to apply for a job in our society. All one needs, instead, is a high-wig to merely make a phooe call and the job is, miraculously, all his.

Perplexing as it may sound to some, favouritism, in our society, is the order of the day. For a long-time this epidemic has taken its toll on our corporations and institutions, causing inefficiency, negligence and lack of professionalism, to name just a few.

Favouritism also causes brain drain, which happens when those qualified get the doors slammed in their faces over and over, simply because they know no big-wig to help them. Constant denial of employment or promotion opportunities to those people would, eventually, cause frustration. Consequently, leaving their home to travel abroad, where their capabilities will be most appreciated, becomes the only way out and leaves behind the playground for many unfit players.

This sad migration of expertise will, inevitably, cause an irreplaceable loss to our society, as well as become a hindrance to progress and innovation.

For how long should most bosses and employers enjoy practising "whimsical employment", paying little or no attention to qualifications, considering, instead, the "recommendation" or "command" of the bigwig?

Some argue that since our society is a traditional one, trying to curtail favouritism will be next to impossible. Should we, then, go on endlessly without even trying to address this phenomenon?

Even though it is long overdue, we are still in dire need of seriously considering the eradication of favouritism. Realistically speaking, however, it will not be an easy undertaking. It will take initiative at every level of society to accomplish this goal.

It is high time to let only qualifications determine one's eligibility for employment or promotion. And when that happens, we can start mobilising our potential for the betterment of our society.

Ali F. Matar,
Amman.

Get serious

To the Editor:

I HAVE never been to China, although one day, perhaps, I will get the opportunity to visit this culturally rich and fascinating country.

Unfortunately, if I were to base any pre-trip planning solely on information gleaned from the pages of the Jordan Times, the appeal for such a trip would surely wear off.

Recent truly illuminating entries have included "Girl suffers from giant tongue, huge teeth" (May 18), "China's abnormal marriages are money deals" (May 19), "Shanghai teenager beats weight-loss record" (May 29), "Man dials wrong numbers for phone sex" (June 6-7), and "China's modernisers go back to Stone Age" (June 13-14), just to name a few.

These stories, if one dares define them as such, can only create a distorted picture of reality, neglecting much more relevant stories which could be printed on current cultural, societal and economic developments in the world's most populous nation.

Such stories belong, if at all, in tabloid magazines and

Heady smoke

To the Editor:

AMMAN IS suffering from the "argila" (hubble-bubble) disease. Ammanites, young and old, men and women, Islamists and liberals, smoke argila.

In Shmeisani, the unofficial argila capital of the world, I asked why argila is so popular.

"When I smoke argila, I remember my true identity. The gentle bubbling noise, the fruit flavoured tobacco, the foggy smoke clouds and the music of Umm Kalthoum create a pure Arab mood that heals my soul," Maher answered. He is an engineer.

Of course Maher's answer seems to be really sophisticated, but it is hopelessly vague. Mamdooh, the Egyptian waiter, made much more sense: "It all started after the Gulf war. The Kuwaiti returnees had nothing to do; mostly depressed and unemployed, they found comfort in argila. It gave them a feeling of self-respect when everyone thought that they were worthless, that is all," he said.

In Sweifeh the young "shabab" also go for an argila or two. I asked Abu Fahd, the driver of the taxi I took, about the popularity of argila.

He totally ignored me and then, with a serious look on his face, said: "I am not really a taxi driver."

"Definitely not," I agreed.

Between the fourth and sixth circles, he told me that he was studying medicine in Romania. Then, in his deepest voice, he said: "Look at me and listen carefully. Argila is popular because we are tired of hearing about the benefits of peace. We are tired of not being able to buy the things we need. We are tired of working long hours for nothing, and we are tired of being poor. Argila helps us forget about our dim future."

My initial explanation for why young people smoke argila was that if one is young, financially subsidised by his/her parents, and wants to feel independent and respectable, then one needs to smoke at least one argila per day to assert that strong desire to break free. But after my visit to the café in Sweifeh, I am the first to confess that I was totally wrong.

Bilal, a first-year engineering student, said: "I will be honest with you. Argila is just an excuse to meet girls after university, but it also has some other benefits. With just a few puffs I feel as if I own the world." It is a cheap drug that makes me and my friends feel happy.

Samira, a senior in high school, interrupted Bilal: "No, argila is not a drug. Argila is popular because we have nothing else to do, and apart from cafés we have nowhere else to go. Here in this café, I really feel free and entertained."

The owner of the café, a 72-year-old retired doctor, told me that the "shabab" have no answers. They simply do not care.

Is argila popular because it is the Arab substitute for famous anti-depressants? Is it popular because we cannot cope anymore with our political and economic problems? I certainly have no idea because answering both questions requires comprehensive empirical investigations, and since such investigations take a rather long time, I can only speculate.

I suspect the argila is popular because it can be whatever one wants it to be.

Ayman Zanoun,
Amman.

Human Rights File

The Mideast scene after Netanyahu's election

By Waleed M. Sadi

THE CASE of the pessimists on the election of Benjamin Netanyahu as the next Israeli prime minister is a straightforward one. The principal argument of the sceptics about the ultimate intentions of the upcoming Likud-led government under the premiership of Netanyahu rests on the now infamous three "nos" attributed to the new Israeli leader, in which he came out strongly against withdrawal from the Golan Heights or East Jerusalem. This is not to mention Netanyahu's doctrinaire verdict of ruling out the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank.

What is not so clear, though, is the case of the optimists who cling to the thesis that the new Israeli government may open new windows of opportunity for peace in the area and not the other way round. The difference between the two schools of thought lies in the proposition that the former is now well elaborated and articulated whereas the latter has yet to reveal its cards in order to explain why optimism in the case of Netanyahu is well-placed. This makes me reach the conclusion that the determined optimists among us should spell out their arguments in favour of their position instead of just postulating that the new situation will exclude an or panic in the wake of the defeat of outgoing Prime Minister Shimon Peres and his Labour-led government.

If the optimists have information which has yet to be made public about why Netanyahu is a blessing in disguise, then let them come forward and tell the sceptics amongst us why Netanyahu's rise to power is a good omen for regional peace. Of course the ongoing debate about Netanyahu's virtues or the lack of them would come to rest the minute we all know a bit more about his inner thoughts and postures. So far, the noise that comes from his direction is indeed disturbing. Netanyahu owes it to his people as well as the peoples and governments of the region to come out loud and clear on his policies.

The Likud Party has a record of talking straight when it comes to issues of war and peace in the Middle East. The fact that the newly elected prime minister has not been so candid, so far, about his ultimate intentions suggests that he has yet to crystallise a stance on how to deal with the Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese. We in the Arab World are now asked to hold our breath for a little longer till the new Israeli cabinet is formed and its policies properly and clearly articulated. This is fair enough. What is not fair is Netanyahu's continued silence on his policy regarding the unfinished business of the peace process. The three nos which he allowed to leak out to the press obviously undermine the counsel for restraint.

I do not understand how a Syrian-Israeli peace treaty can be expected to emerge without entailing a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Everything I have read about Netanyahu's posture on the Syrian heights confirms to me that his headline position on Golan is not for bargaining purposes. All the prin-

cipal partners in Netanyahu's coalition cabinet have made the non-withdrawal from the occupied Syrian territory a sine qua non for their continued support for the new government. I do not doubt for a minute that the views of the new prime minister and his partners are as hard as a rock on the Golan Heights, judging by the way they view their strategic importance from both the security and water resource perspectives.

I happen to believe that Damascus lost the chance of a lifetime to affect an Israeli withdrawal during the reign of former Premier Shimon Peres. It seems to me that the Syrian side overplayed its cards and drove a much harder bargain than they should have, given the clear prospects of a dramatic change in the Israeli political landscape. Even Hizbollah's Katyusha rockets should have been prevented from firing on Israel's northern border towns during an Israeli election period in which all sides, and above all Syria, had a big stake. It seems to me that the Syrian side has conducted itself with utter disregard for the probable ramifications of a Peres loss at this most critical juncture in the Syrian-Israeli peace talks.

Still what has been done is done and now we are faced with an entirely new situation which there is no cause for alarm, appears to exclude an or panic in the wake of the defeat of outgoing Prime Minister Shimon Peres and his Labour-led government. Assad-Netanyahu summit.

Israel knows more than anybody else that Syria is isolated and therefore vulnerable to Israeli threats. What would happen, in the absence of a real breakthrough, the new Israeli leadership gets carried away one day with its threats against Syria and launches an effective attack against it at a time when there is hardly an Arab country that is poised to come to its rescue.

The sour relations between Damascus and Ankara over the issue of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) and the Euphrates waters must weigh heavily on the mind of Syrian military leaders who may now feel squeezed between the hammer and the anvil. The worst scenario that could emerge from a continued warfare between Syria and Israel in the absence of a breakthrough is the clear prospect of a major war between the two countries. What such a regional war would do to the peace process is clearly ominous.

There can be no doubt in the minds of optimists and pessimists alike that the old slogan of no regional war without Egypt and no comprehensive peace without Syria continues to hold true. Of course we still have the other thorny issues of Jerusalem and the future status of the Palestinian territories. Unless a miracle or two happen in the unfinished business of peace in the area and above all in the thinking of Netanyahu and his team, the pessimists amongst us would be right in assessing the new realities in the Middle East.

Palestinians say Israeli delay caused man's death

GAZA (Agencies) — Palestinian officials accused Israel on Sunday of causing the death of a heart patient by delaying his entry from Gaza to Israel for treatment by three hours.

But an Israeli official said soldiers kept the man at the crossing last Thursday for just 35 minutes during a standard security check.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in Gaza obtained a permit for Ibrahim Sirsawi, 34, to be transferred to Tel Hashomer hospital in Israel after he suffered heart failure, Palestinian officials said.

"The soldiers ripped his identity card, saying they couldn't see his picture. They asked him to read out his identity number by heart," said Nahed Shawwa, an ambulance driver who took Sirsawi to the crossing point.

"Seven minutes after crossing Erez (checkpoint), the patient died," Mr. Shawwa said.

He said three oxygen tanks were used up on Sirsawi as they waited for the

Israeli soldiers to allow them to cross.

Avi Gambash, spokesman for the army's coordinating office at Erez, denied the soldiers ripped Mr. Shawwa's identity card.

"The ambulance arrived at 6:20 p.m. to the checkpoint and left at 6:55 p.m. towards Israel after undergoing a standard security check. We reject the Palestinian claims," he said.

Israel has maintained a closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, home to two million Palestinians, since a wave of suicide bombings in February and March killed 59 people in the Jewish state.

When the vehicle was allowed into the Jewish state the patient died from a heart attack 20 kilometres into the journey, the Gaza Association of Human Rights said in a separate statement.

The association blamed the death on "the delay imposed on the ambulance by the Israeli authorities" and said their actions were "contrary to the most basic human rights."

Snakes, scorpions plague Iraqi Kurds in Erbil Castle

ERBIL (AFP) — Iraqi Kurds living in an ancient castle here said Sunday they have appealed to the United Nations for help to quit their ruined houses and a plague of snakes and scorpions.

The castle dates back to 2000 B.C. and rises 25 metres above the main street. "A scorpion bit me and a week ago I killed a big snake. Living conditions here are very hard and a few months ago a house collapsed and two children died," said Mahmud Hameed Ammen Mahmud, 65.

Another resident, Muzafar Sadiq Ahmad, 28, said two other children had been bitten by scorpions recently and he had killed three snakes in his house.

"We have submitted an application to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation but without any answer yet," he added.

Extremist financier in London

(Continued from page 12)

"I carry a Sudanese diplomatic passport under a false name," Mr. Ben Laden was quoted as saying.

In urging sanctions against Sudan, U.S. and other Western officials had cited the presence of Mr. Ben Laden as an example of Sudan's support of international terrorism.

Mr. Ben Laden told Rose Al-Yousef he gave Sudan \$2 million to help support large numbers of Muslim fighters who went to Sudan after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Peres tells cabinet of moral duty

(Continued from page 12)

"Thank God that we no longer rule over the majority of another people," he added.

Mr. Peres was upbeat about the economic dividends of the peace process. He pointed to record levels of foreign investment and tourism as signs of

international confidence in Rabin-Peres peace policies.

Mr. Peres, who lost the election by less than one percentage point, accepted the judgment of the Israeli electorate.

"In a democracy there are changes of power," he said. "One must be able to accept power, and to lose it, in a respectable manner."

Arab ministers meet today

(Continued from page 1)

countries — save Iraq — to the meeting.

But Gen. Bashir whose country supported Baghdad before and during its 1990 invasion of Kuwait and ensuing Gulf war, said he wished Iraq had been present.

"We would have wanted Iraq to participate so that if there is a problem concerning it, it could be discussed at the summit," he said.

Relations between Cairo and Khartoum hit rock bottom after the assassination bid but that did not make

Egypt knock Sudan off the guest list. Gulf Arab states were behind Baghdad's exclusion, diplomats say.

Syria meanwhile urged Mr. Netanyahu to accept trading land for peace and said Israel could not achieve security while it continued to occupy Arab lands.

In a blunt statement, the official Syrian newspaper Al-Thawra said: "Israel would be committing a deadly mistake if it thought it could achieve security without returning all of the Arab lands and rights."



ELECTION SECURITY: Members of a special forces unit sit fully equipped on stand by at their base in Moscow on Sunday as the country went to the polls to elect a president amid tight security (see page one) (Reuters photo)

Arafat releases Hamas leader; hunger strike in Jericho jail

NABLUS (Agencies) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has freed journalist Jamal Mansour, a top leader of the Islamic movement Hamas in the West Bank city of Nablus.

Mr. Mansour said on Sunday he was released on Friday after spending 80 days in solitary confinement in the Nablus police station.

He was arrested as part of the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) crackdown on Hamas following suicide bombings in Israel that killed 59 people.

Mr. Mansour, 36, said he was escorted from prison by Mr. Arafat himself, who was on a visit to Nablus. "There was no chance to talk to each other. It was time for Friday prayers, so we prayed together, then I went home."

"No one mentioned any charges against me for the

whole time I was in jail," Mr. Mansour said. "I felt I was in the whale's stomach like Jonah."

Mr. Mansour was arrested 14 times during Israeli occupation, and this was his first arrest under Palestinian rule.

He was among more than 400 Palestinian activists expelled by Israel to Lebanon for about a year in 1992 on suspicion of ties to Hamas.

The PNA still holds hundreds of Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

On Thursday the 88-member Palestinian Council demanded Mr. Arafat personally hold reconciliation talks with opposition leaders and that Palestinian security forces release the prisoners who are out accused of any crime.

Around 60 Palestinians

imprisoned by the PNA said Sunday they had been on a hunger strike for five days in a bid to force their release.

The members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, who are being held in a Jericho jail, said in a statement to AFP: "We want it to be known that we have been on hunger strike since Tuesday, and will continue until we are returned to our families."

A Palestinian legislator close to the fundamentalists, Moawiyah Al Masri, said he had met with one of the prisoners and discussed the situation with officials.

"We asked for their freedom, but the authorities said they have not yet made a decision," said Mr. Masri, adding that some of the prisoners had been transferred to other jails in the West Bank.

Arab Muslim, Christian clergymen assail Israel

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Arab Muslim and Christian religious leaders meeting in Beirut said Israel must stop its "crimes" against Jerusalem Arabs and Muslim and Christian holy places in the city.

The clerics, at a meeting called by the Council of Middle East Churches, also expressed fears that a regional peace settlement may deny Palestinians an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

"The Israeli crimes against the Islamic and Christian holy places and the Arab person's rights in the Holy City would not occur if it was not for the support and cover from various countries and international forces," they said in a final statement of the "Muslim-Christian meeting for Jerusalem."

"Israel does not refrain from expropriating land from its owners without rightful pretext, does not stop obstructing building permits from (Jerusalem's) Arab sons and does not stop its siege of the city, barring its sons from reaching it freely," the statement, published on Sunday, said.

"All these are crimes against all heavenly codes and earthly laws and must stop immediately," added the statement by the heads of the Coptic, Maronite, Greek Orthodox and other churches and senior Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim and Druze clerics.

It said any Arab-Israeli settlement should also guarantee full Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon, where Israel occupies a "security zone," and the Golan Heights,

seized from Syria in 1967.

A copy of the resolutions will be sent to the June 21-23 Arab summit in Cairo, which will discuss forming a unified Arab stand after right-wing leader Benjamin Netanyahu won the Israeli election in May to become prime minister.

Mr. Netanyahu opposes trading land for peace with Arabs and has vowed to keep the city of Jerusalem in Israeli hands.

The 130 delegates from 15 Arab states urged Arab states and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to unify their position over Jerusalem and asked Muslims and Christians worldwide to support Palestinian rights in the city.

"No authority in the world has the right to Judaize Jerusalem, even make it an international city or terminate its Muslim-Christian Arab character," added the statement.

Any diplomatic mission or foreign agency in Israel that made Jerusalem its headquarters should be considered illegitimate, the statement said.

The religious leaders also placed wreaths on the mass grave of 102 civilians killed in an Israeli artillery attack on a U.N. base in South Lebanon.

As they arrived here, workers were digging a new grave for Badreddin Badreddin, a 70-year-old man who died in a Beirut hospital Sunday of injuries sustained in the April 18 attack on Cana. He was to be buried later in the day.

The clerics included the head of the Egypt-based Coptic Church, Pope Shenouda III, the Greek

Catholic bishop of Jerusalem, Monsignor Hilarion Capucci, and Sheikh Mohammad Osman Saleh of Sudan.

They denounced Israeli attacks on South Lebanon, namely the April 11-27 "Operation Grapes of Wrath" against Hizbollah guerrillas which claimed the lives of 200 people, virtually all civilians.

The United Nations compound was packed with civilian refugees when Israeli artillery shells struck at the height of the offensive against Hizbollah.

The attack triggered an international outcry and spurred a U.S. diplomatic drive to broker a ceasefire to end the fighting.

The head of Lebanon's Shiite Muslim community, Sheikh Mohammad Mehdi Shamseddin, told the visitors: "What you see here are the finger prints of Zionism, of people who represent the antipodes of humanity."

Sheikh Shamseddin appealed for the Arab summit to be held in Cairo to make a show of strength and take tough positions against Israel. He also called for an Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab land in line with U.N. resolutions.

Pope Shenouda denounced the Israeli killings in Cana saying: "Israel kills as if it feels it is not killing human beings."

Monsignor Capucci, who lives in exile, said: "We want peace but we refuse surrender and we will die for the sake of liberating our land."

Bosnian opposition condemns 'brutal' attack on ex-premier

SARAJEVO (AFP)

— Opposition groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina condemned Sunday an attack on former Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic by supporters of the ruling party, saying it was brutal and calling for an inquiry.

Mr. Silajdzic, who resigned as prime minister in January and set up the opposition party for Bosnia-Herzegovina (SBiH), was said by an aide to be in a very bad condition on Sunday at the Zagreb hotel where he was staying.

He was hit on the head with an iron bar in the northwestern Bosnian town of Cazins while campaigning on Saturday for elections to be held by mid-September.

His aides alleged that supporters of the ruling Party of Democratic Action were responsible, although the party itself has issued a statement condemning the attack.

International organisations such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE),

which is organising the elections, also expressed concern.

The OSCE said that "there had been the most blatant failure by the authorities to discharge their responsibilities."

Members of the OSCE and international community said that local police in Cazins did nothing to help Mr. Silajdzic.

"Stopping the pre-election activities of the opposition in such a way is inadmissible," Sejfidin Tokic, vice-president of the Union of Bosnia-Herzegovina Social Democrats, told a press conference in Sarajevo.

The Citizens' Democratic Party, another opposition group, called the attack on Mr. Silajdzic "a violation of the basic democratic principles which should be the bases of the September elections."

"We think that this incident, as well as some other events, tarnishes our reputation in the world and damages the democratisation process in Bosnia-Herzegovina," party president Ibrahim Spahic said in a statement carried by the BH press news agency.

A Serb group which supports the Bosnian authorities, the Serb Civic Council, said that the attack was a "brutal and vandalistic act."

Croats name 'premier' Bosnian croats have appointed a new prime minister for their separatist "republic," supposed to have been dissolved under the Dayton peace agreement, snubbing moves to strengthen Bosnia's fragile Muslim-Croat federation.

Bosnian Croat Radio, broadcasting from Mostar on Saturday quoted a statement from the "Herzegovina-Bosnia presidency" as saying the presidential council had appointed Pero Markovic as the new prime minister.

It said the whole Herzegovina "government" had been reshuffled, and new interior, finance and justice ministers appointed.

Netanyahu

(Continued from page 1)

If Mr. Netanyahu fails to persuade his potential allies to join him in what would be one of Israel's most right-wing cabinets, he could always resort to the idea of a national unity government with Mr. Peres' Labour Party, one radio commentator said.

The Syrian press denounced Sunday the "extremist" team being assembled by Mr. Netanyahu and said it threatened the Middle East peace process.

"It is clear the policies of Netanyahu, who is surrounded by extremists and hawks, pose a serious threat to the peace process as nobody in the world could possibly think Syria would give up its sovereignty of the Golan Heights just to please Zionist radicals and racists," said the government paper Tishrin.

Turkey confirms Syrian buildup

(Continued from page 1)

only allowing very few of them into Syria which in turn has caused prices of goods in the border region to double.

The U.S. State Department said earlier this month that several non-accidental blasts took place in Syria in May. Damascus dismissed the reports, which it said had been traced to Turkish journalists amid cool ties between the two countries over an Israeli-Turkish military accord.

Many Arab governments have reacted angrily to the accord which allows Israeli air force pilots to train in Turkish airspace.

Syrian Ambassador to Iran Ahmad Al Hassan told the Iranian weekly Kayhan Havai on Sunday that Tehran and Damascus were looking to take coordinated action against the accord.

"Syria and Arab countries are conscious of wanting good neighbourly relations

with Turkey but the logical interpretation of this Israeli-Turkish accord is that it constitutes a means of pressure on Syria and a threat to its security," said Mr. Alif in Cairo.

Al Hayat said one of four blasts — none of which caused casualties — was a booby-trapped car which exploded in the Bassatin region just outside Damascus near the home of Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK).

Syria's decision to give refuge to Mr. Ocalan, whose organisation has been heading a 12-year rebellion against Ankara in the mainly Kurdish area of southeast Turkey, has caused friction between Syria and Turkey for many years.

The two countries are also at odds over Turkish plans for a huge dam project spanning the River Euphrates which also flows into Syria and Iraq.

U.N. team

(Continued from page 1)

"We have seen a lot of military personnel inside the fences of these sites," Mr. Smidovich said.

"There is an obvious solution to the crisis — that is to provide access in accordance with Iraqi obligations," Mr. Smidovich added. U.N. officials in Baghdad would not comment on a BBC report that the team was withdrawn after it suspected the Iraqis had already destroyed what was inside the sites.

An AFP correspondent reported Saturday that U.N. inspectors, who had parked five UNSCOM jeeps near a Republican Guard barracks in the Al Qadisiya area of Baghdad, had withdrawn from the position they had occupied since Wednesday.

The stand-off also involved two sites at Abu Gharih, 30 kilometres to the west, according to Iraqi officials.

Yeltsin takes early lead

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Yeltsin's senior political aide Georgy Satarov said he was satisfied with the initial results.

Mr. Satarov told NTV commercial television that the Far Eastern results were in line with Kremlin forecasts. "The satisfaction is not so much with the forecasts as with the fact that uncertainty is being reduced," he said.

If the final result were to conform with this partial count, Mr. Yeltsin would face Mr. Zyuganov in a second round of voting sometime in early July.

Mr. Ryabov said Mr. Zhirnovsky was running in fourth place of the 10 candidates, with 9.55 per cent of the vote and Mr. Yavlinsky was fifth with 8.42 per cent.

The poll was conducted by three institute — the German

Forschungsguppe Wahlen, the U.S. Mitofsky International and Russian Cessi. The margin of error in the exit poll was said to be three per cent.

According to the early official results from the Far East of Russia, released after nationwide polling finished at 1900 GMT, Mr. Yeltsin was ahead in each region.

The results, showed that in the Primorye region Mr. Yeltsin scored 30 per cent, Mr. Zyuganov 24 per cent and Mr. Lebed 20 per cent.

In the Magadan region Mr. Yeltsin scored 38 per cent, Mr. Lebed 24 per cent and Mr. Zyuganov 16 per cent. In the Sakhalin, Mr. Yeltsin scored 30 per cent, Mr. Zyuganov 27 per cent and Mr. Lebed 18 per cent.

And in Kamchatka, Mr. Yeltsin scored 34 per cent, Mr. Zyuganov 19 per cent and Mr. Yavlinsky 17 per cent.

'Saudisation' is the new buzz-word in Saudi Arabia

DUBAI (R) — "Saudisation" has become the buzz-word in Saudi Arabia, where officials say boosting the number of Saudi nationals in the kingdom's workforce is a national goal.

Almost daily interviews with officials in the Saudi media stress the need to rely less on expatriates and secure jobs for Saudis in the private sector — dominated by foreigners.

About six million expatriates work in Saudi, which has a population — including the expatriates — of about 18 million. Fewer than seven per cent of the private sector employees are Saudi, economists and bankers in the kingdom say.

"The authorities are quite serious about Saudisation," one banker said. "Whether it will be a success is not clear."

Concern that unemployment of Saudis could stir social upheaval similar to unrest in neighbouring Bahrain as well as the effect of expatriate remittances on the kingdom's current

account deficit prompted the government to address the problem, say the bankers and economists, who would not be quoted by name.

Official unemployment numbers are not available.

"The government realises that unemployment would be fertile ground for social upheaval and is keen to address the problem sooner than later," one economist said.

"There is concern that having expatriate labour in the country and those people remitting money out of the country is draining the economy," a banker said. "However, to strike a balanced argument those people who are here are actually working and contributing to the development of the country and the growth of the economy."

The economists and bankers say close to 40 per cent of Saudi Arabia's oil revenue leaves the country in the form of remittances every year.

Saudi Arabia, the world's

largest oil producer and exporter, has since the 1980s been running a current account deficit in which remittances have played a major role, they say.

Official figures show the deficit declining to \$9 billion in 1994 from \$17.3 billion in 1993.

Henry Azzam, chief economist at the National Commercial Bank, told Reuters he projected the deficit to stand at \$5 billion to \$6 billion in 1995.

He said remittances totalled \$15.3 billion in 1994 and estimated them to stand at \$14.5 billion in 1995, compared with an estimated oil revenue of \$39 billion in 1995.

Saudi Arabia's 1995-2000 development plan set a target of 659,900 new jobs for Saudis by the end of the century. Some 319,500 expatriate workers would be replaced by Saudi citizens.

It said private companies must increase the number of Saudi workers on their staff by five per cent a year or face sanctions.

Economists and bankers say training Saudis and persuading them to do menial jobs could be a slow, difficult process.

But in recent years Saudi attitudes towards jobs changed.

Saudi citizens had for decades enjoyed their country's oil wealth and favoured well-paid, half-day managerial jobs in the state sector, where the government always made room for them.

Unskilled and menial jobs have been left for Asian and non-Saudi Arab workers, while private sector managerial jobs are filled by Western and Arab expatriates.

But a state spending squeeze due to low oil prices in the early 1990s and huge Gulf war costs changed that.

"I'm not sure it is true that there are jobs Saudis won't do. Increasingly you see Saudis in all sorts of occupations where perhaps five or 10 years ago you would not have seen them. It is

quite normal now to see Saudi taxi drivers and Saudi bus drivers," one banker said.

"There are some specialised areas where some training will be required and these areas will take longer for Saudis to take over. This is not going to happen overnight, but it is certainly a policy that will be enforced and reinforced," he said.

Interior Minister Prince Nayef said recently that Saudisation of jobs was inevitable. He said the private sector was the biggest importer of expatriate manpower to the kingdom with more than 500,000 visas issued last year.

"It is the duty of the private sector to shoulder the responsibility towards Saudisation which has become one of our main goals," he said.

He said the percentage of Saudis working in various government departments ranged between 65 per cent and 99 per cent.

European job summit calls for innovation but no commitments

ROME (AFP) — Europe's job summit ended Saturday with a call for nations to develop innovative ways of organising work and modernise the labour market to combat unemployment in the European Union (EU), but failed to make any binding commitments.

Innovative ways of organising work can meet companies' needs for flexibility and employees' wishes for a better relationship between work and family life, said Italian Labour Minister Tiziano Treu, who presided over the meeting.

Presenting the conclusions of the two-day summit

which brought together employers, governments and unions, Mr. Treu said new measures should be achieved "through collective bargaining at all appropriate levels" in Europe, where 18 million people are out of work. However, the conference did not specifically advocate a reduction in time at work.

At the close of the meeting, employers and unions announced they would open negotiations soon over the issue of part-time work but any resulting plan would be without the involvement of governments or the European Commission, the

EU's executive branch.

Only eight of the 15 European member states sent labour ministers to the conference, designed to prepare a dossier on jobs for the European summit in Florence on June 21-22.

Britain, Germany and Spain sent senior civil servants while France was represented by its junior Employment Minister Anne-Marie Coudert. It was also attended by members of the European Union Trades Union Confederation and the European Community Union of Industries.

The summit's conclusions

reflected the pact for jobs presented in January by European Commission President Jacques Santer.

They also referred to the "European social model" championed by French President Jacques Chirac which advocates encouraging economic growth while protecting social welfare.

The summit recommended a combination of measures — negotiations at all levels to modernise the labour market, national political efforts towards economic stability, realisation of a unique European market, simplification of national employment systems and more European investment, notably for communications, and the transfer of EU structural

funds towards employment.

However, European sources said the jobs issue risks being overshadowed by next week's Florence summit by the crisis over "mad cow" disease.

Francois Pericot, French president of the European industry body, said he was pleased the summit "did not ask us to make any written commitment on a European tripartite social agreement that we would have had some difficulty subscribing to."

However, the secretary-general of the union confederation, Emilio Gabaglio of Italy, said he wanted commitments because "it's not sufficient to talk."

ANNOUNCEMENT Central Bank of Jordan

Commemorating the Golden Jubilee of Independence, The Central Bank of Jordan issued limited quantities of the following coins:

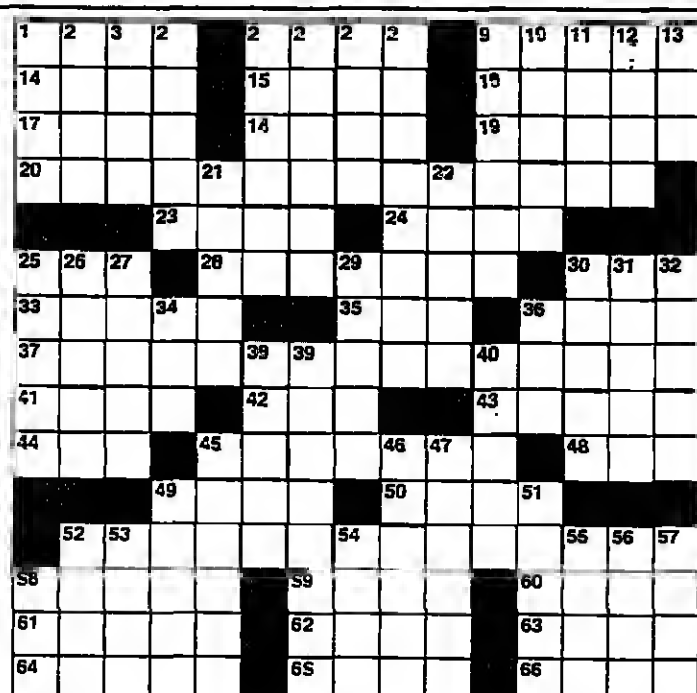
Denomination	Silver	Gold	Piedfort, Gold
Alloy	999/1000	22 ct.	22 ct.
Diameter	40 mm	30 mm	40 mm
Weight	31.1 gm	16.96 gm	33.91 gm
Price	15,000 JD	175,000 JD	360,000 JD

For orders and further enquiries kindly contact:

The Central Bank of Jordan
Currency Issue Department
P.O. Box 37 Amman - Jordan
Tel: 630301 Fax: 638889

THE Daily Crossword by Charles R. Woodard

- ACROSS
- Miami county
 - Nuts
 - Sudden flood
 - Last word
 - Always
 - Composer of "Over the Rainbow"
 - Lisa
 - Fatigue
 - Vex
 - Hitchcock film discussion?
 - Publicize
 - Scarlett's place
 - de mer
 - Debit's opposite
 - Inventor's monogram
 - So long
 - Chin or Malt ending
 - Dress
 - Ill-tempered allusions?
 - Gave
 - Temporarily
 - Paul Bunyan tool
 - Morning drink
 - Printer's measures
 - Chivalrous undertaking
 - Sunburn
 - Loion ingredient
 - Raincoats, in Cornwall
 - Lack of laith
 - Orchestra output
 - Cautic
 - Toast cover
 - Acclamation
 - Gen. Robt. —
 - Buss
 - Difficult years
 - Show excessive love
 - Diner sign
- DOWN
- Moist
 - O.T. prophet
 - Gainsay
 - Pass



Wednesday's Puzzle solved:

S	C	A	T	S	P	A	T	S	O	P	O	R
H	O	L	E	P	O	G	O	T	S	O	N	E
E	V	E	N	M	O	N	E	R	O	O	T	S
B	E	R	N	A	R	O	S	H	A	L	L	O
A	T	T	E	S	T	E	W	E	R			
P	A	S	S	E	E	B	R	O	M	O	L	E
A	S	T	E	R	R	O	E	S	I	M	O	N
L	I	R	E	F	O	X	Y	E	N	S	U	E
M	A	E	C	O	X	S	C	A	N			
E	L	A	N									
O	E	T	E	N	T	E	E	R	A	S	U	R
A	L	C	A	N								
S	L	A	V	E	I	D	O	L	T	O	O	L
H	A	R	E	S								

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SYBSA
IKKAH
FILTUP
HARGIS

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumble: STROKE FLOOD TERROR DITHER

Answer: How much are did the miners find? — LODES OF IT

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

"Of course the large chips cost more — there's 75 cents' worth of extra air in the bag!"

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



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Mobile: 079 - 38008 (Hussam)

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Annual contract. Please contact: Tel: 861805

Mobile: 079 - 38008 (Hussam)

TURINO Restaurant Weekly Newsletter

New Menu at TURINO Restaurant

The feature editor of this column has learned that Turino has overhauled its menu to what it calls the Great New Menu of TURINO!

It is simply a menu set out in a new style by adding a few Oriental dishes, new flavours and other splashes of gastronomy flair. The menu is called "great" because of its production in style that will probably make it one of the most unusual menu formats.

The food is far more important. The stress TURINO puts on its quality of ingredients is already paying off especially with the foreign community. THIS MONTH'S MOTTO FOR TURINO RESTAURANT IS...

Momentous Memories in Jordan... Could Be a TURINO Meal!

FOR THE VISITOR TO JORDAN TURINO RESTAURANT IS TUCKED AROUND THE MAIN SQUARE OF SWEIFEH ON THE SOUTHERN SIDE OF 6TH CIRCLE.

As a reader of this column of "The Jordan Times" request a glass of wine if you are a group of four. You'll get a away with it - no matter how small is your meal or party!

The TURINO Restaurant has now become famous for its Sizzling Fillet and Exotic Sauces. THE NEW ADDITION IS THE SAUTEEED CHICKEN ON THE SKEWER SERVED WITH ORIENTAL FRESH HERBS.

TURINO guarantees that the CHEF uses the highest quality ingredients absolutely.

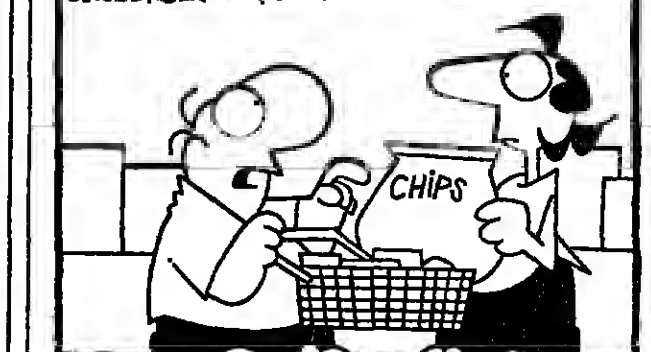
PASTA CARNIVAL JD 10 SKEWER LINE JD 12 SEAFOOD & SHRIMP JD 13

All include taxes and service

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THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



"Of course the large chips cost more — there's 75 cents' worth of extra air in the bag!"

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY JUNE 17, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You want to expand your career activities today, however you may have to take a different course of action than you had planned. However follow through with any ideas which have at the time any you will be successful.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Some financial difficulty may arise in the morning today, however, handle it wisely and everything will be well and proceed as you have envisioned. Don't go off on any digressions from your game plan at this time.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Don't let a fellow associate upset you in the morning today or you will notice some complication which you are ready to handle. Later tonight, you have better rapport with your mate and loved ones.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You may have to make some changes in your plans for the day today in order to get better results in your career activities and these changes will be noticed by those in authority who will praise your success.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your position may change today where financial affairs are concerned, so use care in handling them. Take care of your health so that you will be able to handle any personal or career situation which materialise.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You feel like making radical changes in the morning today, however this would not be beneficial to your business or personal life. Contact one who is influential and has the ability to make you successful.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You find it difficult to solve some difficulty with your loved ones in the morning today, so put it aside for a while. Matters at home are rather confusing at this time, however if you are patient everything will be alright.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Steer clear of a new acquaintance who could cause you a great deal of difficulty in the morning today, however this person could be helpful at a later time frame. Tonight will be good for being with your mate at a romantic place.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Try not to do anything today which could annoy a bigwig in any manner, and later tonight be careful in any monetary dealings so that you do not find yourself short of funds when the need arises.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Steer clear of a new contact in the morning today who is very talkative and could be self-serving in such a manner which could cause difficulty with those in authority by making delays in your progress. Get more rest.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Don't commit yourself to anything of a serious nature today since you have a private concern which bothers you in many ways. Later tonight, you can meet with fellow associates and devise some plan of action for your success.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) A fellow associate could put you through the wringer today if you are not careful to whatever situations this individual may put you through. Be very alert while out driving on the highway at this time.

Birthstone of June: Emerald — Citrine

Expatriate women find Asia difficult to crack — survey

SINGAPORE (AP) — Expatriate women have not made inroads in executive positions in companies in Asia, where large numbers of local women are holding middle and senior management positions, according to a survey.

The survey by Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd. (PERC) indicated there was a shortage of expatriate women working in executive positions in all the countries of the region.

As it could not come up with the minimum number of respondents required for a "representative and meaningful" sampling, PERC only provided anecdotes of the written opinions it received.

PERC cited Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore and said all had a few expatriate women who had risen to quite senior positions "but their numbers are very few."

It also said more expatriate women could be found in China and Vietnam than in Indonesia.

This indicated that Western women were having more success cracking the higher ranks in some of the countries just entering the international business scene than they were in countries where patterns of expatriate employment were more established, the report said.

Based on responses received to the survey by PERC, Hong Kong received top marks when it came to the ease with which expatriate women could find jobs.

But the women found the British territory just as stressful as men in terms of its pressure cooker living environment, the report said.

PERC said among the more successful Western women in Asia were those in the diplomatic corps and those who were married to nationals of the countries in which they were residing.

The report also said that Asian women were doing well in the corporate scene.

"Expatriate women may not be present in large numbers, but local women are," the report said, adding that the trend was particularly striking in countries Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Thailand.

As many multinational companies and banks tried to localise their staffing as much as possible, Asian women have been in particularly high demand based on competency factors alone, PERC said.

"Portraying Asian women as docile home-bodies whose role in life is to raise children and play a subservient role to men does a gross injustice not only to Asian women but also to the systems in which they live," it said.

The report noted that Asia was far from perfect in the way women were treated but "the trend towards greater protection of women's rights has been evident in almost every Asian country."

"And in many ways there is a lot that the West can learn from the East with respect to gender issues in the workplace," PERC said.

Egypt lets foreign banks dominate joint ventures

CAIRO (R) — The Egyptian parliament changed the banking law Saturday so that foreign shareholders can go beyond a 49 per cent limit on their holdings in Egyptian joint venture and private banks.

The amendment mainly affects foreign banks which have gone into partnership with one of the big four state-owned banks and want to expand their operations.

Joint-venture banks were originally attractive because they allowed foreign banks to operate in Egyptian pounds rather than just foreign currencies. But they lost their edge in 1993 when 100 per cent foreign banks won similar privileges.

One of the joint ventures, Egyptian American Bank (EAB), already plans to increase its capital so that the state bank would become a minority shareholder. EAB is a joint venture between the state's Bank of Alexandria (51 per cent) and American Express Bank (49 per cent).

Giles Cutajar, joint managing director of Banque du Caire Barclays International, told Reuters he expected foreign partners to move quickly to buy out at least part of the local stake. His bank is the joint venture bank 49 per cent owned by Barclays and 51 per cent by the state's Banque du Caire.

In other amendments to the banking law, parliament abolished old restrictions on the fees banks charge for their services and increased the maximum amount a bank can lend to a single creditor, from 25 to 30 per cent of the bank's capital base.

Leftists in parliament fought a rear-guard against the first amendment, saying that giving foreigners more influence in the banking sector could damage the national economy.

Finance Minister Mohammed Al Gharib answered that the banking sector, still 80 per cent controlled by the big four state banks, was strong enough to handle the change.

BUSINESS

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordan Petroleum Refinery distributes highest ever rate of dividends

THE JORDAN Petroleum Refinery Company will distribute JD 5.12 million in dividends to shareholders at a rate of 16 per cent which is the highest percentage allowed under the concession agreement between the company and the government. The rate is also the highest ever authorised by the general assembly which approved the 1995 financial accounts last week. Dividends were distributed at a rate of 12 per cent in 1994.

Board Chairman Abdul Majeed Shoman told the shareholders that the government had favourably responded to amend the concession agreement and to find solutions to outstanding problems. As such, the company has agreed to the request of the government to postpone the arbitration procedure. The postponement, he said, would provide enough time for various efforts being currently exerted to find suitable solutions between the company and the government.

Mr. Shoman said that the company was owed approximately JD 170 million by various government institutions and departments. Of the amount, JD 110.6 million is owed by Royal Jordanian while the remainder is owed by the Armed Forces (JD 18.1 million) and the Jordan Electricity Authority (JD 36.7 million). He said that the cabinet decided in April 1995 to reschedule the Royal Jordanian debt over 10 years and to have the airline pay its financial obligations as they become due but Royal Jordanian was not able to make the payments in line with the decision. However, Mr. Shoman assured the general assembly that all the government debt was secured from the state's finances as the company was withholding funds equal to the amount of debt representing the cost of crude oil due to the treasury.

On the operation side, the company refined 3.18 million tonnes of crude oil last year. It also imported 926,700 tonnes of fuel oil, diesel and gas in addition to 20,600 tonnes of basic oils from Iraq. After processing, the company's production of various oil products amounted to 3.1 million tonnes, 6.1 per cent higher than the volume produced in 1994. In addition, the company manufactured 112,400 gas cylinders in 1995. Sales of oil products increased 6.5 per cent over 1994 as they amounted to four million tonnes that fetched JD 461.7 million. The sales income, which was 6.2 per cent over the 1994 figure, came down to JD 11.8 million of net profit after deducting operational, administrative, selling and other costs.

According to the annual report, the company's assets increased by 13.7 per cent to JD 350.5 million of which JD 295.5 million were current assets and net shareholders equity totalled JD 57.4 million (Al Rai + Al Aswaq + Al Dustour).

UAE banks urged to merge to face competition

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Commercial banks in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) should merge to strengthen their financial position and face growing world competition, officials have said.

"It is the right time now for UAE banks to merge. All of them have performed better and this makes it easier for their boards to reach balanced agreements that will serve the interest of all parties," said Al Hamez, director of the banking operations at the central bank, said.

"Mergers between the banks reflect growing awareness of the financial and economic developments. The merger should not necessarily be a result of a negative state but a reflection of a positive state and a proof of the sound banking system," he told the UAE economic weekly Al Iqtisadi.

The UAE central bank has repeatedly urged the Gulf country's 18 national banks to merge to face competition from foreign banks and expand their capital base to meet international adequacy standards.

Officials and bankers said this would also minimise competition inside the UAE and cut the number of banks, which total 47 with the foreign units. Such a high number has led bankers to classify the UAE as an overbanked country given its relatively small population of 2.3 million.

Several UAE banks merged in mid 1980s to avert collapse.

Financial Markets in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (June 10 — June 14, 1996)

AMMAN — The dollar depreciated marginally against the yen and the mark Monday, while it appreciated slightly against sterling. The dollar depreciated after the 30-year treasury bond fell, pushing its yield to 7.11 per cent. Furthermore, the Dow Jones Industrial Average declined by nine points, contributing to the dollar's depreciation. Traders were reluctant to take long dollar positions, however, the dollar's exchange rate rose upon news that Japan's ministry of finance plans to buy 10-year Japanese government bonds. The news triggered speculation that the Bank of Japan will not raise official interest rates in the near future.

The dollar continued its depreciation against other major currencies Wednesday. The dollar fell against the yen and the mark, while it rose against the pound. The dollar rose upon the release of US May PPI and CPI results, in addition to the outcome of Russian presidential elections, later in the week.

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The US... not continued its marginal depreciation against the yen and the mark at the end of the week, while it depreciated slightly against sterling. The dollar appreciated against the yen upon news that Japan's Sumitomo Corp had approximately \$1.8 billion in copper trading. Furthermore, rumors that the Bank of Japan bought dollars against the yen encouraged traders to take long dollar positions. At the same time, the dollar rose against the mark on sale by speculators that communist Germany's reunification may win the upcoming Russian presidential election.

The US unit, thus, ended the week at 1,527.5 marks, 109.15 yen and at \$1.5710 in the pound.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	Friday June 7, 1996	Friday June 14, 1996	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5380	1.5370	(0.07) %
Deutsche Mark	1.5268	1.5275	0.01 %
Swiss Franc	1.2697	1.2565	1.05 %
French Franc	5.2040	5.1760	0.54 %

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: June 16, 1996

Currency	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	0.7060	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0660	1.0721
Deutsche Mark	0.6620	0.6652
Swiss Franc	0.8626	0.8656
French Franc	0.1366	0.1373
Japanese Yen*	0.0080	0.0081
Dutch Guilder	0.4133	0.4154
Italian Lira*	0.0457	0.0459

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JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Mitchell wins, Joyner-Kersee beaten at U.S. Olympic trials

ATLANTA (R) — Eight times Olympic champion Carl Lewis struggled home last as Dennis Mitchell cruised to an impressive victory in the men's 100 metres final at the U.S. Olympic athletics trials on Saturday.

Lewis, after developing a cramp in his right calf in his earlier semifinal, could not muster any of his famous mid-race speed and finished eighth in 10.21 seconds in the race to determine the U.S. 100-metre team for the Atlanta Olympics.

"I hope I've still got some more moments," said Lewis, who will attempt to participate in his fourth, and final, Olympics by qualifying for the long jump, and perhaps the 200 metres later this week.

But the 1984 and 1988 Olympic gold medalist said this was his last championship 100 metres.

The stunning night also produced a stirring victory by world champion Gwen Torrence over Olympic gold medalist Gail Devers in the women's 100 metres, and world record holder Jackie Joyner-Kersee's first loss to an American in a heptathlon that she finished since 1983.

Mitchell, the 1992 Olympic bronze medalist, won the men's 100 metres in 9.92 seconds, despite also developing cramps. He sprawled on the track after the race and called for medical attention.

"I got out well but at 50 metres every muscle in my leg started to cramp... And I said, 'Lord, take me to the line' and he did," said Mitchell, who was clothed in a day-glo green uniform.

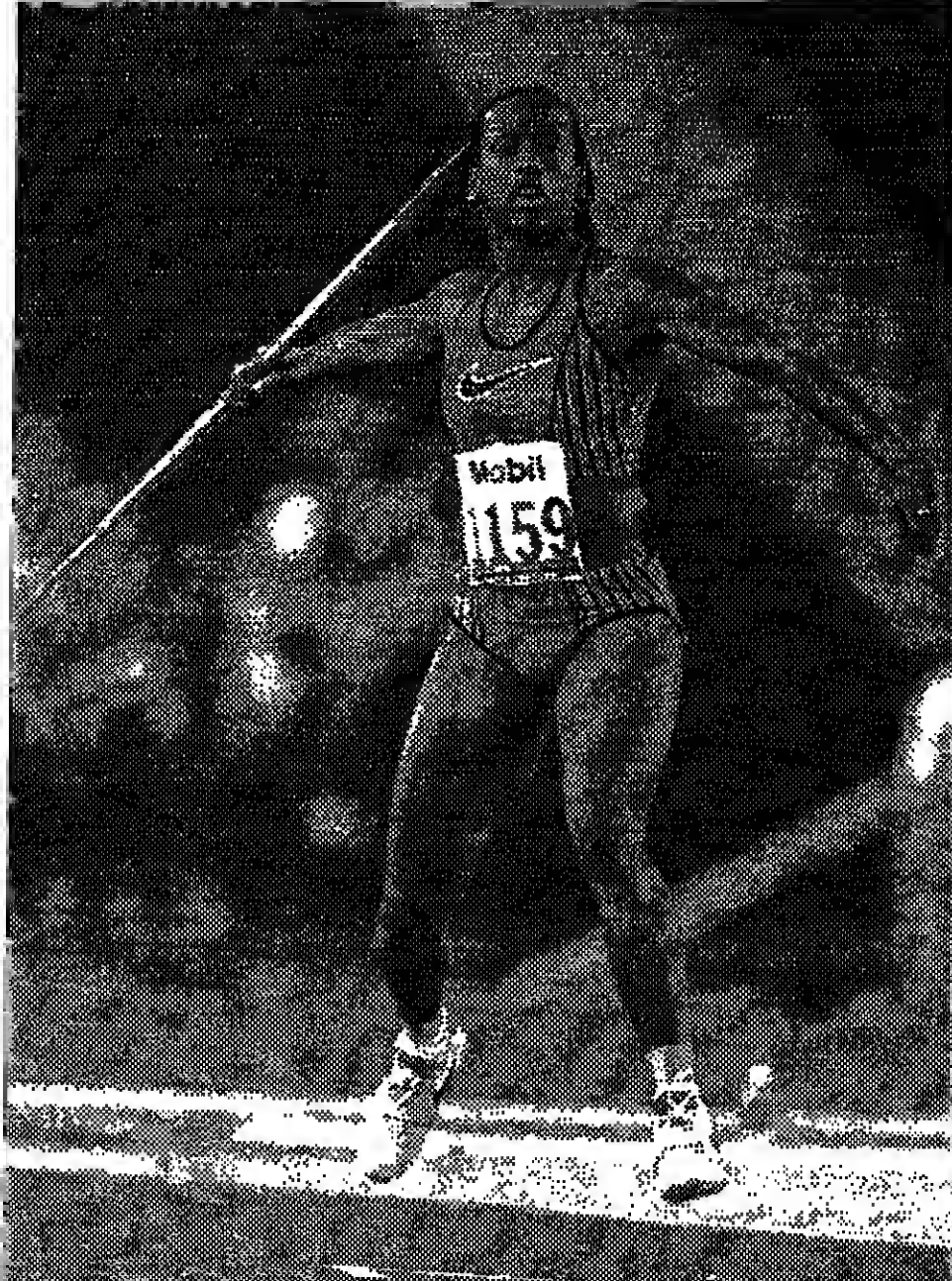
"And I'm Barcelona-bound, baby," added the excited Mitchell, obviously forgetting he was in the very stadium where the 1996 Games would be staged.

Olympic 200-metre champion Michael Marsh was second in the race in 10.00 seconds and Jon Drummond nailed down the third and final U.S. 100 metres spot with a time of 10.01 seconds.

Jeff Williams finished fourth in 10.06 seconds with world record holder Leroy Burrell sixth in 10.07.

Torrence came out of the starting blocks behind Devers in the women's race, but by 30 metres the Atlanta native was challenging for the lead and took it by the halfway mark.

Torrence won the women's 100 in 10.82 seconds — the fastest time of the year and equal to her career best.



Heptathlete Jackie Joyner-Kersee throws a javelin during the heptathlon competition at the U.S. Olympic trials June 15. Joyner-Kersee, the world record holder finished second in the heptathlon but qualified for the Olympic team (Reuters photo)

Devers clocked 10.91 seconds for second and collegiate champion D'Andre Hill was third in 10.92 seconds.

"Now the show has begun. I can get ready for the party and I hope to dance in July," said Torrence, who hopes to compete in the 100 and 200 metres and at least one relay here in her hometown next month.

Blair overtook Joyner-Kersee in the final event of the heptathlon, running the 800 metres in 2 minutes, 12.23 seconds to finish with 6,406 points. Joyner-Kersee had 6,403 points, but still made the team as one of the top three.

"I'm not angry or disappointed (about losing),"

said Joyner-Kersee. "Nothing was going my way, but I have no excuses."

Kenny Harrison, the 1991 world champion, struck early in the men's triple jump, soaring a wind-aided 18.01 metres (59 feet, 1 1/4 inches), on his first and only attempt. Only three men have ever jumped farther than Harrison, who did backflips for the crowd as he took a victory lap.

Olympic champion Mike Conley was second at 17.57 metres (57 feet, 7 3/4 inches).

In the shot, world record holder Randy Barnes delivered the longest put of the season, 21.37 metres (70 feet, 1 1/2 inches), to pace a strong U.S. Olympic team in the event. World champion John Godina claimed second at 21.19 metres (69 feet, 6 1/4 inches) and C.J.

Hunter earned the final U.S. berth at 21.07 metres (69 feet, 1 1/2 inches).

World champion Michael Johnson, bidding to become the first male to win gold at 200 and 400 metres in the same Olympics, began his trials with a swift, but relaxed run in the 400. Wearing eye-catching purple shoes, Johnson dominated most of the race before easing up at the line to claim second in 44.80 seconds. Anthon Maybank was first in 44.77 seconds.

"I took it out relaxed and patient," Johnson said. "And then I just kind of took it easy coming down the home stretch."

The trials continue through June 23 with the top three finishers in each event qualifying for the Atlanta Olympics.

N. Korea to send 70-member team to Atlanta

TOKYO (R) — North Korea, long absent in strength from international sports, intends to send a 70-member delegation including 24 athletes to next month's Atlanta Olympics, a pro-North Korean newspaper said Sunday.

The Chosun Sinbo newspaper, regarded as the official mouthpiece of North Korea in Japan, said the athletes will compete in the men's and women's marathons, table tennis, boxing, wrestling, weightlifting, shooting and gymnastics.

The delegation, the biggest North Korean team to travel to an international sports event in four years, will be headed by Chang Ung, secretary general of the North Korean Olympic Committee.

Other members of the team would be officials, coaches, doctors and journalists.

The Chosun Sinbo is the official publication of the general association of Korean residents in Japan, an umbrella group representing Koreans living in Japan who are sympathetic to Pyongyang and have relatives in the communist nation.

North Korea does not have diplomatic relations with Japan.

Groups of two or three North Korean athletes have appeared at foreign sports events over the past four years, but North Korea has halted appearances by large teams as the country struggles through difficult economic times.

The 1992 Barcelona Olympics was the last time North Korean athletes were on show in strength. That team won four gold and five bronze medals.

Edberg, Becker reach Queen's final

LONDON (AFP) — Grass court maestros Boris Becker and Stefan Edberg will serve up a repeat of their 1988 final after winning their semi-final matches at the Queen's Club tournament in London on Saturday.

Edberg recovered from the loss of the first set tie-break to put out top seed Thomas Muster while Becker, the second seed, beat Wayne Ferreira in straight sets.

Edberg's 6-7 (2/7), 6-3, 6-2 win boosts his claims to a place among the 16 seeds at Wimbledon, which starts the week after next, despite being ranked only 26 in the world. Wimbledon's seeding committee do not always strictly follow the world rankings, preferring to give extra weight to players with a proven grass court pedigree.

But clay court king Muster, who had never won a match on grass before this week, said: "If Wimbledon doesn't seed by the world rankings you might as well have different rankings for each surface."

"We have rankings and we should stick by them. If they are going to make an exception, perhaps Stefan should be in the top four."

Edberg, 30, looked a spent force after losing the first set tiebreaker, but suddenly found the determination to challenge for another title before he retires in November.

Muster had never beaten Edberg in seven previous meetings and the Austrian's power game was eventually overwhelmed by his opponent's finesse — and some splendid backhand volleys.

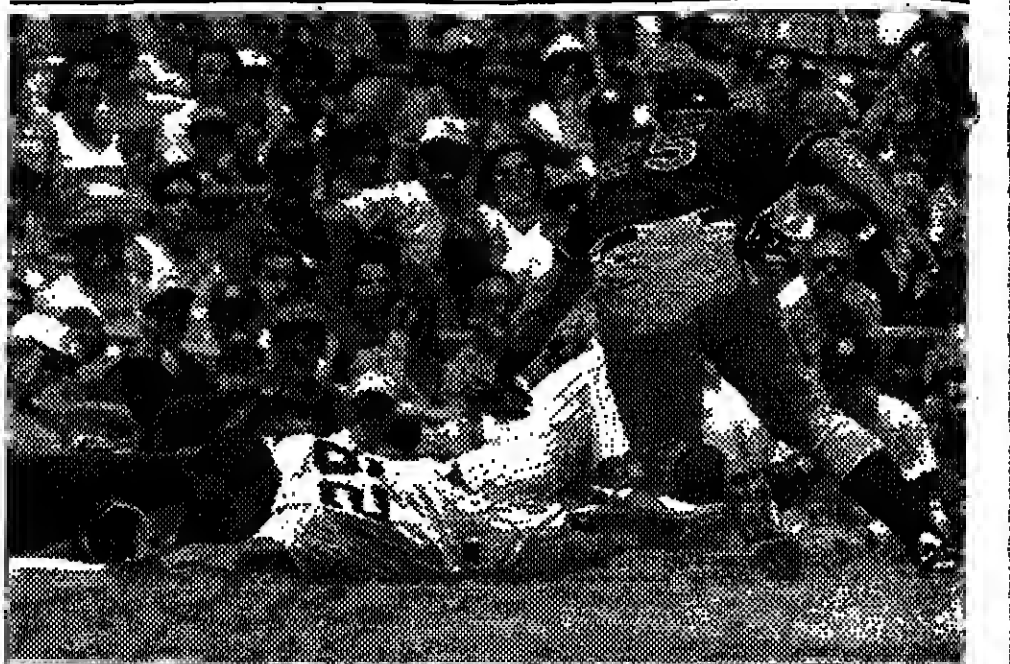
"This is the best I have played for a long time," said Edberg.

"I am serving and moving well and I'm match tough. But winning Wimbledon again? I don't know about that."

Becker — who beat Edberg in three sets in their Queen's showdown eight years ago — cruised past South African Ferreira 7-6, (7/4), 6-4 in 92 minutes, using his serve-and-volley game to good effect.

"I am playing great tennis at the moment and that was by far my best match," said Becker, who first played at Queen's 11 years ago.

"I am a happy man right now. The final should be a classic."



New York Yankees runner Gerald Williams (29) twists his leg as he slides into third base trying for a second inning steal June 15 at New York's Yankee Stadium. Cleveland Indians third baseman Jim Thome (25) applied the tag for the out as he slid past (Reuters photo)

Nagy first to reach 11 wins in A.L.

NEW YORK (R) — Jim Thome and Manny Ramirez each hit two-run home runs and Carlos Baerga belted his 100th career homer to help Charles Nagy become the American League's first 11-game winner with a 10-3 rout of the New York Yankees on Saturday.

Nagy (11-1) went seven innings in winning his eighth straight decision. He allowed three runs and seven hits.

In Kansas City, Mike MacFarlane's sacrifice fly in the bottom of the 16th inning scored David Howard with the winning run as the Royals edged the Baltimore Orioles 7-6 in the longest game in the American League this season.

Royals reliever Mike Magnante (1-1) turned in a sensational performance for the win. He retired 15 straight batters between the 11th and 16th innings, allowing just a single to Cal Ripken in 5 1/3 innings.

In Boston, Warren Newson had four hits, including two homers, and Rusty Greer tied a team record with three doubles as the Texas Rangers crushed the Red Sox 13-3.

In Milwaukee, Jose Valentin had an RBI single and stole home in a four-run fifth inning as the Brewers scored a 12-9 victory over the Oakland Athletics.

Fernando Vina, John Jaha, Greg Vaughn and Dave Nilsson homered for Milwaukee.

At Minnesota, Cecil Fielder's towering two-run double off the roof of the Metrodome broke a seventh-inning tie, lifting the Detroit Tigers to a 6-4 win over the Twins.

Omar Olivares (3-2) allowed four runs and nine hits to earn the win.

Olivares became the first Tigers pitcher in a span of 127 games to win consecutive starts.

At California, J.T. Snow's run-scoring single in the bottom of the eighth snapped a tie and Don Slaught delivered a two-run homer in the sixth to lead the Angels to their seventh straight win, a 7-5 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays.

A Chili Davis RBI single tied the score at 5-5 before Snow hit a 1-0 pitch into center, scoring Salmon for a 6-5 lead.

In Seattle, Brian Hunter belted a two-run homer off Kirk McCaskill in the bottom of the 12th inning to lift the Mariners to a 8-6 victory over the Chicago White Sox.

Griffey also had a two-run homer off Kevin Tapani in the seventh. It was his 23rd round tripper of the year. Frank Thomas belted his 20th for Chicago in the third and Dave Martinez also homered for the White Sox.

Astros past Giants

In the National League, Craig Biggio homered twice, driving in three runs, and donee wall allowed two runs over seven innings as the Houston Astros edged the San Francisco Giants 4-3 Saturday.

San Francisco's Shawon Dunston joined the career 100 home run club, reaching the milestone with a two-run shot in the seventh. Steve Scarsone added a solo blast in the eighth to account for the rest of the Giants offense.

In Atlanta, Delino Deshields and Eric Karros each had two-run hits in a five-run third inning and Hideo Nomo pitched six strong innings as the Dodgers beat the Braves 6-

2. Nomo (8-5) pitched 6 1/3 innings and allowed one run on six hits before leaving with a mild strain of his right calf.

In the first inning, the Dodgers executed their first triple play in 47 years.

In Chicago, Tim Lincecum allowed one run over eight innings and Steve Finley cracked a two-run homer in the sixth as the San Diego Padres halted their eight-game losing streak with a 2-1 victory over the Cubs.

At Colorado, Armando Reynoso gave up five hits over seven innings and Eric Young homered as the Rockies beat the Philadelphia Phillies 4-2 for their fifth straight win.

In St. Louis, Alan Benes allowed two runs over 7 1/3 innings and the Cardinals scored three times in the second inning to dump the New York Mets 4-2.

Benes (6-4) allowed six hits before giving way to Rick Honeycutt in the eighth. Dennis Eckersley had two strikeouts in a 1-2-3 ninth for his ninth save.

Bobby Jones (6-3) allowed four runs and eight hits in seven innings for the loss.

New York's Jose Vizcaino had three hits and an RBI and Lance Johnson hit a solo homer for the Mets' other run.

In Cincinnati, Shane Andrews homered and drove in three runs and Henry Rodriguez added a double and two RBIs to lead the Montreal Expos to a 6-5 triumph over the Reds.

In Pittsburgh, Jeff King homered and Charlie Hayes drove in four runs as the Pirates jumped out to a 10-run lead and held off the Florida Marlins 12-8, for their 11th win in 13 games.

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Pacers, Nuggets trade players

INDIANAPOLIS (AFP)

— The Indiana Pacers, ousted in the first round of the National Basketball Association playoffs after reaching the previous two semi-finals, made a four-player swap with Denver.

The Pacers sent starting point guard Mark Jackson and reserve shooting guard Ricky Pierce to the Nuggets for Jalen Rose and Reggie Williams.

Jackson, 31, joins his fourth club in nine years. He averaged 10 points and 7.8 assists. Pierce, 36, averaged 9.7 points and joins his sixth NBA team.

Rose, 23, was the 13th draft pick two years ago. Williams, 32, missed 30 games with injuries last season but averages 12.7 points a game in nine NBA seasons.

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Lady luck shows

no mercy for losers

LONDON (AFP) — Gary McAllister's missed penalty in Scotland's 2-0 defeat by England provided dramatic evidence of the thin line between success and failure in the most open European Championship finals for years.

But the Scots are not the only ones who have been contemplating the fickleness of lady luck as they prepare to board one of the eight early flights home.

Romania, who were clearly robbed of a goal, and Turkey can also feel hard done by after narrow defeats in their first two matches left them thinking "if only..."

The Portuguese meanwhile believe their progress in the tournament is hanging by a thread as a result of card-happy referees.

The turning point in the championships for the Scots was the second-half penalty incident in the "battle of Britain" when hope turned to despair in the space of two breathtaking minutes.

Trailing 1-0 with a quarter of the match to go, Gordon Durie was brought down by Tony Adams in the area. The tartan army erupted in delight as the experienced figure of McAllister placed the ball on the penalty spot.

Wembley fell momentarily silent before the Scotland captain blasted his kick straight at David Seaman and watched the ball ricochet over the bar for a corner.

Within a minute England had surged forward before Paul Gascoigne produced a single moment of magic to fire England into an unassailable 2-0 lead and virtually guarantee England's advance and Scotland's exit.

Scotland boss Craig Brown was only too aware that his hopes of further progress had disappeared in two bats of an eyelid.

He said: "The more likely scenario if we had scored the penalty would have been a win for us. I'm sure that if we had equalised we would not have conceded their second."

"Psychologically we would have been in the ascendancy. England would have been on the back foot."

As it is, Brown must now rely on a set of freak results if they are to delay their return north of the border.

Scotland, though, should spare a thought for the unfortunate Romanians who were millimetres away from staying in the competition only for the referee to rule out an equaliser in the 1-0 defeat to Bulgaria.

Dorinel Munteanu's ferocious left-foot drive cannoned off the underside of the crossbar and bounced down over the line only for Danish referee Peter Mikkelsen to wave play on.

An inch lower and the Romanians would have been going into the final Group B match against Spain with every chance of reaching the quarter-finals.

Romanian midfielder Ioan Lupescu said that one split second and the snap judgement of the referee spelt the end of Romania's dream, adding:

"I have watched the incident on television and there was nothing wrong with it. It was definitely a goal."

Turkey are on the way back to Istanbul after two 1-0 defeats to Croatia and Portugal that could so easily have gone the other way.

Not until the 85th minute did Croatia finally break the Turks, whose spirited resistance deserved at least a point.

But they were even more unfortunate against the Portuguese who they overcame in the first half and had two penalty claims turned down.

The Portuguese, though, do not feel as if they have been the beneficiaries of good fortune, insisting that the margin between possible triumph and despair has been narrowed by vindictive refereeing.

Paulino Santos is already suspended and seven other players have been yellow-carded.

Portugal coach Antonio Oliveira claims the victimisation will cost his team.

"We have watched all the games so far and I can tell you there is a very wide difference in the criteria being used for the other teams and the Portuguese national team," he said.



French forward Zinedine Zidane (left) struggles with Rafael Alkorta of Spain in France's second match against Spain in Group B of the 1996 European Soccer Championship (Reuters photo)

Spain — the comeback kings of tourney

LEEDS (AFP) — If Euro 96 awarded a 'comeback' award there is no doubt it would go to Spain.

Five minutes from crashing out of the championship in their match against France on Saturday, the Spaniards snatched a 1-1 draw that suddenly blew Group B wide open.

Almost a week earlier, Bulgaria looked to be on the way to three points after Hristo Stoichkov struck but Spain's never-say-die spirit kept them coming forward and with it the equaliser.

And now Spain could find themselves going into the quarter-finals when they play their final group match against Romania on Tuesday.

Romania have already failed to qualify and have only pride to play for after losing their two previous matches.

Coach Javier Clemente knows he is lucky to be still fighting for a quarterfinal place after the French match.

"We were on the rack in the opening 30 minutes and in the first 20 minutes of the second half," admitted Clemente who has now led Spain to 19 straight matches without defeat.

True to form, Clemente will change his line-up for the Romanian match.

"I will keep the same system but use different players," he explained.

"Nowadays I pick my team according to the opposition. I adjust my team selection and my tactics."

"Some people say this is a negative approach but I don't think so. I always want to make the best use of the players I have. I can only do that by considering how the opposition will play and how we can take advantage of their weakness," he added.

As usual, Clemente will wait until the last minute before naming his team for the Romanian game.

"You cannot tell the world your plans in advance. I never announce

my team two or three days before a match. The day before a game I tell one person.

Andoni Zubizarreta, my captain," he said.

Spain have never won a major title outside their own country since winning the European Championship in 1964. But Clemente has dreams of ending the drought.

He even has a dream final at Wembley on June 30.

"Spain-England. That would be wonderful for me because I love football," he enthused.

He dismisses fellow Spaniards who claim the English game is all physical, without finesse.

"For me it is not enough to play pretty football. You have to play effective football. You need players with strength, determination and spirit, as well as skill," says Clemente.

With two comebacks in two matches, Clemente's team has all the spirit he could ask for.

Euro 96

Klinsmann leads Germany to spectacular 3-0 win

MANCHESTER (AFP) — Jürgen Klinsmann celebrated his return from suspension by scoring two goals to help Germany to a 3-0 victory over Russia in their Group C match here Sunday.

His first goal, in the 77th minute, put the Bayern Munich striker into the record books, making him the only man to score in three successive European Championship finals.

Klinsmann added a second in injury time following Matthias Sammer's 56th minute opening goal.

Banned from Germany's Euro opener against Czech Republic because of collecting two yellow cards in the qualifying rounds, Klinsmann showed why he is considered one of the greatest strikers in the world.

The former Tottenham player outran defender Yuri Nikiforov and then, from the edge of the area, flicked the ball off the outside of his right foot high into the



Germany's Matthias Sammer celebrates with teammate Oliver Bierhoff (left) after scoring a goal for his team June 16 (Reuters photo)

corner of the net.

His second came in injury time when he slipped the ball past an onrushing Dmitri Khario but by then Russia had been well beaten.

The Germans have now collected a maximum of six points but will have to wait until their last match against Italy on Wednesday to be sure of a quarter-final place.

Germany opened the scoring in the 56th minute thanks to an inch perfect pass from the halfway line from Andreas Moeller. The hall split the defence and dropped just in front of defender Sammer who had gone bustling forward on the counter attack.

Jordan plays alongside Turkmenistan, Bahrain as Asian Youth Soccer Championship qualifiers kick off today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's national Under-16 soccer team have the day off Monday and will have a chance to see their opponents playing as Group 1 matches of the Asian Youth Soccer Championship qualifiers kick off in Manama, Bahrain.

Jordan will be playing alongside Turkmenistan and Bahrain in the group, the winner of which qualifies for the final round in Thailand Sept. 14-28.

Hosts Bahrain meet Turkmenistan in today's opening match. Jordan plays Turkmenistan Wednesday, and Bahrain Friday.

Jordan's delegation had arrived in the Bahraini capital Friday evening and had a light practice session Saturday.

The competition includes 30 Asian teams divided into nine groups. Japan are the titleholders of the last championship held in Doha in 1994.

Jordan's team includes Tareq Fayed, Shaker Khleif, Ashraf Shatat, Osama Hatamleh, Ahmad Da'san, Mohammad Masri, Ali Omar, Mahmoud Ahd, Osama Yacoub, Ammar Shreideh, Mohammad Wajih, Ahmad Abdul Hadi, Mohammad Harbi, Abdullah Ka'abneh, Abdullah Qutai, Baha' Abdul Mune'm, Sufyan Izzat, Rami Zhravi, Sezar Sobar, Ghayyath Tamimi, and Mahmoud Shihayeh.

Schedule of matches

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- * Wed. 19/3 Jordan - Turkmenistan
- * Fri. 21/3 Jordan - Bahrain

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Palestinian gets death sentence

JENIN (AP) — A Palestinian military court has sentenced a 24-year-old man to death for murdering a clan leader, the prosecutor-general in this West Bank town said Sunday. The military court in Jenin on Saturday found Khaled Shahadeh Absi guilty of killing businessman and clan leader Khaled Sobh 13 months ago, Prosecutor-General Ahmed Mbayed said. Absi, from a refugee camp near Jenin, is to be executed by firing squad, he said. He has 14 days to appeal the ruling. It was the third death sentence handed down by a Palestinian court since Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority was established in 1994. Palestinians took control of Jenin last November. The previous two death sentences have not yet been carried out, because Mr. Arafat has not yet given his required personal approval, Mr. Mbayed said.

S. Arabia beheads man for murder

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia on Sunday beheaded a man for murder, Saudi state television reported. Hamdi Bin Hmoud Al Oneizi was beheaded in the capital Riyadh for slaying a fellow Saudi man, said an Interior Ministry statement carried by the television. Beheadings by the sword, in line with strict Islamic law enforced in the conservative kingdom, are usually carried out in public after Friday's noon prayers. It was the second beheading to be carried out on a day other than Friday this year. The execution raises to nine the number of people reported beheaded this year, including four Saudis found guilty of homing a U.S.-run military training centre in Riyadh last year in which five Americans and two Indians were killed. Last year the number of beheadings for various crimes in Saudi Arabia soared to 192. Most of those executed were convicted drug smugglers from the Indian sub-continent.

Women abduct, rape Bangladeshi man

Kuwait (R) — A Bangladeshi worker in Kuwait was abducted by three women and raped by one of them, in the first such reported incident in the conservative emirate, a newspaper said on Sunday. In the first such incident in Kuwait, three women, probably in their 30s, abducted a Bangladeshi sanitary firm worker while he was working near a hospital, Al Watan newspaper said. The women forced the man into their car on Wednesday and took him to an isolated desert area where one of them asked him to have sex with her. When he refused they beat him up and stripped him of his clothes, it added. "One of them forced him to commit adultery with her, then she and her friends beat him up again and drove him back to where he worked," the paper added. It did not give the nationalities of the women but said they spoke Arabic. Officials were not available to comment on the report.

Bike bomb kills 2 in Afghan town

ISLAMABAD (R) — A bomb planted on a bicycle went off in the eastern Afghan town of Jalalabad on Sunday, killing two people and wounding 25, a Pakistan-based Afghan news service said. The afternoon blast occurred near northern Jalalabad's communications square, which is close to the provincial governor's palace and local communications and municipal offices, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said. There was no immediate word on who had set off the bomb. Jalalabad is the capital of Nangarhar province, which borders Pakistan and is ruled by a council that has remained neutral in recent years of fighting between forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani and his opponents.

Turkish troops kill 28 rebel Kurds

DIYARBAKIR (R) — Government troops have killed 28 Kurdish guerrillas in new clashes in southeast Turkey, security officials said on Sunday. They said 16 Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas were killed in clashes on the border with Iraq that brought the PKK's four-day loss in the rugged region to 163, according to government figures. Turkish security forces stepped up their operations against Kurdish separatists last week. Security officials said on Friday that Turkish troops had penetrated several kilometres into Iraq to hunt PKK rebels but then withdrew. Twelve other rebels were killed in the southeastern towns of Baskale, Smak and Nusaybin, officials said. Officials did not say when the clashes took place.

Jewish agency head promotes streamlining

TEL AVIV (AP) — The chairman of the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organisation is proposing the two organizations be merged to more efficiently handle Jewish fundraising and immigration issues, a statement said Sunday. "These organizations were founded at the end of the 19th century... To meet the needs of the Jewish people at that time, these organizations are no longer suited to the challenges," said a statement by Abraham Burg, who heads both groups. Yossi Beilin, a cabinet minister in the outgoing government of Shimon Peres, had encouraged such restructuring, arguing that the agencies may even no longer be necessary at a time when Israel is increasingly prosperous. After Mr. Burg's proposed reorganization, the new group would focus on intensifying the involvement of world Jewry in Israeli life, promoting immigration to Israel from Western countries and granting humanitarian assistance to Jews in need. Mr. Burg will formally submit his proposal to the groups' governing council this week, the statement said.

Court backs student against women

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian court has backed a graduate student who demanded that women professors be barred from his doctorate committee, the weekly Rose Al-Yousef reported on Sunday. The student in the chemistry department of Zagazig University in Egypt's northern Nile Delta, asked the head of his department head to remove all "female elements" from the committee, the weekly said. When the official refused the request, the student, identified only as M. Sherif, appealed to the science faculty council, which backed him and ordered two women on the committee overseeing his doctorate thesis to be removed. The two professors, samia al-sheikh and Nabila Ismail, in turn complained to the university president, who ordered them put back on the committee. Mr. Sherif replied by taking the university to court, saying he had "personal disputes with the two professors which could damage his future if they remain on the committee". The court in Ismailiya, 140 kilometers northeast of Cairo, agreed to remove the teachers because of "personal disputes", but sent the case to a higher court to consider whether women can be banned from a doctorate committee. Ms. Sheikh denied she had any personal disputes with Mr. Sherif, telling the weekly the student's suit was based on "backwards ideas and his fear that people might mock him for having women oversee his doctorate."



POLICEMAN KILLED: Ambulance workers carry the body of an Israeli policeman into an ambulance on Sunday. The policeman was killed and his wife was wounded in an attack in the West Bank village of Biddiya (see page one) (Reuters photo)

Palestinians publish draft constitution based on democracy and pluralism

RAMALLAH (AFP) — The Palestinian press on Sunday published the first draft of a constitution for an independent state of Palestine, setting out a democratic and multi-party government.

The draft says that "Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine" but recognises that the city is holy to all three religions, Islam, Judaism and Christianity. The document published by the governing body of the self-rule council calls on the people to "begin to discuss the draft" before it goes before the legislature.

The draft sets out 133 articles of basic law defining civic rights and duties as well as public freedoms and the organisation of legisla-

tive, executive and judicial powers.

Basic law will apply solely during the "interim period" of self-rule due to last until May 1999 when in principle the final status of the autonomous territories should have been decided upon in negotiations with Israel.

"The Palestinian people are part of the Arab Nation and Palestine is part of the Arab World," the draft added, saying Islam would be the official religion of Palestine and Arabic the official language.

"The government of Palestine is a parliamentary and democratic system based on political plurality and taking into considera-

tion the rights and interests

of minorities." It defined Palestinians as "Arab citizens who were living normally in Palestine until 1947 and all those born since that date to a Palestinian father."

However, it did not set out the borders of Palestine. "Palestine recognises basic human rights and freedoms laid down by international convention and declarations. The Palestinian National Authority will work to adhere to the international accords and conventions on this subject," the draft added.

It also commits the authority to respect "the tolerance and co-existence of all religions in Jerusalem and across all Palestine."

The presidential term of

office is fixed at five years, renewable once only. And the first term will expire with the end of limited self-rule.

If the president, currently Yasser Arafat, dies or resigns from office, the chairman of the self-rule council, now Ahmad Qouria, will assume his responsibilities for a maximum of 60 days to allow new elections to be organised.

The cabinet, with the approval of the self-rule council, can call a state of emergency, but only in cases of dangers to national security, war, invasion, rebellion or a natural disaster.

Peres tells last cabinet of 'moral' duty behind autonomy agreements

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Shimon Peres on Sunday defended the autonomy accords struck with the Palestinians as he chaired probably the last cabinet meeting of the outgoing Labour-led administration.

"The Oslo accords were a moral act, opening an historic and decisive chapter in relations between the peoples of the Middle East," he said, quoted by Israel radio.

Former foreign minister from 1992 under the government of Yitzhak Rabin. Peres took over as prime minister when Mr. Rabin was assassinated last November by a Jewish extremist.

He gave Sunday's meeting a positive analysis of the Labour government's four years in office, during which he helped to craft the deals launching Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and most major West Bank towns.

Mr. Peres is due to hand over to incoming right-wing Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu who is aiming to present his new government line-up to parliament on Monday.

Mr. Netanyahu, who cam-

paigned on a hardline platform stressing the need to ensure Israel's security, has contested the basis of the autonomy accords but said he would respect them as a "fait accompli."

He narrowly beat Mr. Peres in the May 29 elections for the prime minister, and was Sunday trying to finalise the details of his coalition cabinet, set to be one of the most right-wing in Israel's history.

Mr. Peres on Sunday also hailed his slain predecessor Rabin as a man who gave his life for peace.

"This government was created by yitzhak rabin, who paid with his life for his opinions. He was sacrificed upon a new path," said Mr. Peres.

Yigal Amir, a religious Jew, assassinated Mr. Rabin in November for the Israeli leader's policy of swapping land for peace with the Palestinians.

"This was an excellent, just and responsible government which presided over an historic chapter of the Jewish people," Mr. Peres told the cabinet.

(Continued on page 7)

Concern voiced over Netanyahu's sole command over nukes

JERUSALEM (AP) — A commentary in Israel's top-selling newspaper on Sunday raised concerns that Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu will have unchecked power over Israel's alleged nuclear capability under the country's new system of government.

"Netanyahu, by himself, in utter secrecy, with no supervision of an elected or appointed body, will control Israel's nuclear potential," wrote Meir Stieglitz, a leading columnist of the Yediot Achronot daily. Under the new system, "the prime minister is free to act without minimal accountability to the Knesset."

The commentary was a rare public challenge of Israel's secretive nuclear policy, and reflected widespread concerns that the new system placed too much power in general in the hands of the prime minister.

Mr. Netanyahu, who won Israel's first direct election for prime minister on May 29, must initially win approval of a majority in the 120-member Knesset.

But he is thereafter much freer to act independently than previous leaders.

Unlike in the past, the Knesset needs an absolute majority, not just a plurality, to unseat him — and in such a case the Knesset itself would be also dissolved.

Israel has never acknowledged it has nuclear arms, saying only that it would not be the first to use nuclear weapons in the region. Western intelligence reports say the country is the only nuclear power in the Mideast and has a significant stockpile.

Outgoing Prime Minister Shimon Peres has said that the Mideast should be made free of nuclear weapons as part of a future comprehensive peace between Israel and all its Arab neighbours.

But Mr. Netanyahu opposes any Israeli commitment to rid itself of non-conventional weapons.

Yiftah Shapir, an analyst from Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies, said that despite the new system he expected Mr. Netanyahu to maintain Israel's traditional position on nuclear weapons. "The minute he enters the job he will adopt the policy that existed until today," Mr. Shapir predicted.

Court asks PNA to explain Sarraj detention

GAZA (Agencies) — The high court of Gaza ordered Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's self-rule authority on Sunday to explain why it was still keeping human rights activist Iyad Sarraj in jail.

Dr. Sarraj, an outspoken critic of Mr. Arafat's administration, was arrested last week. In a note smuggled from prison, Dr. Sarraj said he had been beaten by policemen who were trying to frame him on a trumped-up drugs charge.

The Palestinian high court gave Attorney-General Khaled Al-Kidra five days to explain why Dr. Sarraj, a 53-year-old psychiatrist who heads an independent citizens rights group, was still in detention.

If it is dissatisfied with the explanation, the court can order the release of Dr. Sarraj, who was detained a week ago, a statement by Dr. Sarraj's lawyer said.

On Thursday, a magistrate's court in Gaza ordered Dr. Sarraj, released on bail on drug possession charges. But on the same day, the state security court ordered him held for 15 days on charges he assaulted a police officer.

Dr. Sarraj has denied attacking a policeman and claims police planted 95 grammes of hashish in his office.

His attorney, Raji Sourani, said both the assault and the drug charges apparently were designed to silence his client, who has criticised Mr. Arafat's rule as corrupt and autocratic.

Dr. Sarraj last week appealed the charges to the high court, which is responsible for reviewing actions of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and police, said a statement issued by Mr. Sourani's Palestinian Centre for Human Rights.

"The state security court... defines all international standards of fair trial," the statement said.

Mr. Sourani said Dr. Sarraj, a psychologist who runs a Gaza City mental health centre and also heads the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights, told him he believed the real reason behind his detention was a letter he had written to Mr. Arafat a day before his arrest.

In the letter, Dr. Sarraj complained that the PNA was trying to discredit him by "spreading poisons of hatred and cheap slander of my personality."

He was arrested by the PNA for the third time on June 9. Last month, police detained Dr. Sarraj for more than one week after the New York Times quoted him as saying that the PNA was "corrupt, dictatorial and oppressive."

"We hope to visit him soon," said Jawad Bulous, an attorney in Jerusalem who is the director general of Dr. Sarraj's human rights group. "I think his arrest is unjustified and he should be released immediately."

COLUMN

Space writer questions Sri Lanka time

COLOMBO (R) — Space writer and visionary Dr. Arthur C. Clarke has his mind on a more mundane matter these days: Earth time in Sri Lanka. British-born Clarke, a long-time Sri Lanka resident, was quoted by the Island newspaper Sunday as pressing for Sri Lanka to be an even six hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) instead of six-and-a-half hours. "An enormous amount of inconvenience is caused by the odd 30 minutes difference from an integral time zone, and has become even more of a nuisance with developments in international communications, phone calls, satellite TV etc.," the author of 2001 — A Space Odyssey was quoted as saying. "I have pointed out the absurdity of this to every administration since 1970," he said. Sri Lanka, suffering eight-hour power cuts a day because of a shortage of electricity, recently put its clocks forward one hour to make maximum use of daylight.

Mrs. Clinton to tour East Europe

WASHINGTON (R) — Hillary Rodham Clinton plans a goodwill tour of Eastern Europe next month to show U.S. support for newly independent democracies in what was once the Communist Warsaw Pact, a U.S. official said. She will visit Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Estonia during the July 1-11 tour and conclude the trip with a stop in Finland, said the official, who asked not to be identified. "Mrs. Clinton's tour will underscore the U.S. commitment to and support for the newly independent democracies in the region," the official said. Highlights were to include a July 4 U.S. Independence Day speech by the first lady at Radio Free Europe Headquarters in Prague. She also planned to visit the Auschwitz Nazi concentration camp in Poland, the official said. Mrs. Clinton was to begin the trip — her second solo goodwill tour this year — after accompanying President Bill Clinton to the economic summit of the Group of Seven industrial democracies in Lyon, France. The summit will take place June 27-29 and the Clintons plan a one-day visit to Paris afterwards. Chelsea Clinton, their 16-year-old daughter, is not scheduled to accompany them, the official said.

Rare Brazil parrot no love bird, flies the coop

BRASILIA (R) — The last known specimen in the wild of a rare breed of Brazilian parrot flew the coop just as scientists were hoping it might mate with a female raised in captivity, a newspaper said Saturday. Biologist Marcos Da-Re told Correio Braziliense the so-called small blue parrot disappeared along with a female from a different breed, known as the Maracana parrot, which had been its partner for several years. The Maracana had prevented a small blue female, raised in a zoo and introduced as a potential mate, from approaching its possible partner. Now cattle-handlers and hunters were on the lookout for the flyaway birds in the remote Raso Da Catarina area of Bahia state, northeastern Brazil. The small blue parrot, scientifically known as Cyanopsitta spixii, was virtually wiped out by hunting until Mr. Da-Re, backed by international wildlife groups, began promoting conservation among local communities, the newspaper said.

Extremist financier residing in London — magazine

CAIRO (Agencies) — A Cairo magazine said on Sunday it had interviewed Islamist groups financier Osama Ben Laden in London and that Mr. Ben Laden said he was travelling on a Sudanese diplomatic passport under a false name.

Arab press reports said Mr. Ben Laden, a Saudi-born businessman stripped of his Saudi citizenship, left Sudan last month at the request of the Khartoum government,

which is under international pressure to stop sheltering Islamist opposition groups. They said he had moved to Afghanistan via Pakistan.

But the Egyptian state-owned magazine Rose Al Youssef said it tracked Mr. Ben Laden, 44, down to a tightly guarded house in the London suburb of Wembley.

The financier said: "I am on a mission with the U.S. embassy in London... I don't live in Sudan now. I move around all the time and

don't have any one country as a base."

"Generally speaking Sudan needs me more than I need Sudan and I say that my leaving Sudan will lead to the collapse of what's left of the economy in Sudan," he added.

Asked to comment on political trends in Sudan, he said: "It's a mixture of religion and organised crime."

Mr. Ben Laden rose to prominence in the 1980s as paymaster for the Muslim

Mujahedeen fighting the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

After Islamists took power in Sudan through a military coup in 1989, he moved his headquarters to Khartoum and invested millions of dollars in the country.

Western intelligence sources say he has had links with many Islamist opposition groups which have passed through Sudan, including the Egyptian Jihad group.

Sudan asked him after the U.N. Security Council levelled diplomatic sanctions against it on charges it supported Islamic radicals.

Asked if he had been afraid Sudan might extradite him, Mr. Ben Laden said: "It is possible. I do not live in Sudan now. I am constantly travelling and have not taken a permanent residence in any country."

(Continued on page 7)